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The ADVENTURE *Of*
The LADY URSULA



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of
The LADY URSULA

A Comedy in Four Acts

BY

ANTHONY HOPE

Anthony Hope



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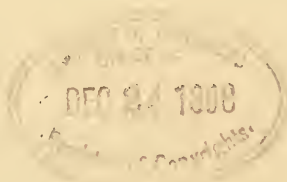


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By ROBERT HOWARD RUSSELL

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N O T E



THE play is here given as it left the author's hands. It is presented on the stage without important or substantial alterations but with a few changes of detail, due to the taste and experience of those under whose auspices LADY URSULA made her appearance on the boards, and to whom the author takes this opportunity of rendering his cordial and grateful thanks.

A. H.



A COMEDY IN FOUR ACTS

Characters

The EARL OF HASSENDEN

SIR GEORGE SYLVESTER

The Rev. Mr. BLIMBOE

Mr. DENT

Mr. CASTLETON

SIR ROBERT CLIFFORD

Mr. WARD

Mr. DEVEREUX

QUILTON

MILLS

SERVANT

Miss DOROTHY FENTON

Mrs. FENTON

The LADY URSULA BARRINGTON

} Officers in the Foot Guards

} Servant to Lord Hassenden

} Servant to Sir George Sylvester

} At Lord Hassenden's town lodging

} Betrothed to Lord Hassenden

} Her Aunt

} Lord Hassenden's Sister

The period of this play is about 1760-70. The action takes place between four o'clock in the afternoon of a day in October and one o'clock the next morning.

ACT I. *passes at* LORD HASSENDEN's house at Edgware near London.

ACT II. *at* SIR GEORGE SYLVESTER's house in the same village.

ACT III. *at* LORD HASSENDEN's town lodging, near St. James'.

ACT IV. *again at* SIR GEORGE SYLVESTER's.





The ADVENTURE *of* *The* LADY URSULA

A C T I

The EARL OF HASSENDEN's house at Edgware near London — between four and five on an Autumn afternoon. A window back C., a door L., a fire-place R. Room is panelled; in the panel L., below door, is a full-length mirror. DOROTHY stands by window, Mrs. FENTON sits by fire-place, BLIMBOE stands L. C.

MRS. FENTON.



IF your leisure is exhausted, sir, I must not beg you to stay; but I regret that on your first visit as rector of the parish you have not found Lady Ursula at home.

BLIMBOE.

I share your regret to the full, ma'am.

MRS. FENTON.

Dorothy, shouldn't Ursula be back from her walk soon?

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DOROTHY.

I — I don't know when she'll be back, Aunt.

BLIMBOE.

I fear I must take my leave. Sir George Sylvester expects me. As you may have heard, I am his guest until my parsonage is ready.

DOROTHY.

[*Coming down C.*] Sir George is an old friend of yours, isn't he?

BLIMBOE.

Yes, and a good friend. He gave me the living, Miss Fenton.

DOROTHY.

He doesn't visit here. We have never seen him, though Lord Hassenden used to meet him in town formerly.

BLIMBOE.

You must pardon his rudeness. You know the story?

DOROTHY.

Something about a duel?

BLIMBOE.

Yes, he killed his best friend in duel.

DOROTHY.

About — about a lady, wasn't it, Mr. Blimboe?

BLIMBOE.

Yes, and I fear she was not worth one good man's life and another's bitter grief.

MRS. FENTON.

I'm sure of it.

BLIMBOE.

So he has sworn to fight no more, to go no more into the society of women, and to admit no lady to his house.

DOROTHY.

Surely, Mr. Blimboe, you don't approve of such barbarous oaths ?

BLIMBOE.

The second part only is barbarous — and the first only has my approval.

MRS. FENTON.

Yes, but it's true enough that wherever women come, quarrels come. These duels are fearful things. Pray, Mr. Blimboe, have you read in the *Postboy* of the affair in Dublin ? Lord Hassenden says the town is ringing with it.

DOROTHY.

What was it ?

BLIMBOE.

Yes, yes — between Colonel Joicey and Mr. McArthur.

MRS. FENTON.

Brothers-in-law !

DOROTHY.

And they fought ? What was the quarrel about ?

BLIMBOE.

About ——

MRS. FENTON.

It's of no consequence about what. They fought after dinner, across the table.

DOROTHY.

What, lunging with their swords among the decanters ? Oh, they must have looked absurd.

MRS. FENTON.

They fought with pistols, child.

BLIMBOE.

Pardon me, ma'am, you may more truly say with one pistol,

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for the other was unloaded. Each combatant drew one at random.

M R S. F E N T O N.

Yes, and Mr. McArthur drew the right one and shot the Colonel through the head. He fell across the table, dead in an instant and breaking all the glass !

D O R O T H Y.

How horrible ! I think Sir George Sylvester is quite right not to fight. *[Goes up to window again.]*

M R S. F E N T O N.

Is Ursula in sight, Dorothy ?

D O R O T H Y.

No, I see nothing of her.

M R S. F E N T O N.

Then we mustn't detain you, Mr. Blimboe. But stay — we shall be at home this evening. Pray come and drink tea with us, and make yourself known to Ursula.

B L I M B O E.

With the utmost pleasure. I won't fail you. Ladies, your servant. *[He bows — they curtsey. He goes off L.]*

D O R O T H Y.

[Coming down.] I wish he'd bring Sir George with him.

M R S. F E N T O N.

My dear, if Sir George does not wish to know the ladies of the neighbourhood, nothing can be more undignified in them than to seek or even to desire acquaintance with him. *[Sits again.]*

D O R O T H Y.

But he's such an interesting man, Ursula says.

MRS. FENTON.

Interesting indeed ! He certainly was a noted duellist and I'm afraid, a sad rake, too.

DOROTHY.

Do you think all that makes him less interesting, Aunt ? If I weren't going to marry Frank ——

MRS. FENTON.

Pray don't let Lord Hassenden hear you say such things.

DOROTHY.

Of course not, but I may say them when he doesn't hear me, I suppose. Anyhow, Ursula finds Sir George interesting. [*To window again.*] She must be back soon, unless — Oh, what fun ! But I should lose my wager.

MRS. FENTON.

What are you talking about my dear ? [*DOROTHY comes down, laughs, whispers in her ear.*] What ? What do you say, Dorothy ? Heavens above us ! Gone to Sir George Sylvester's ! Ursula gone to — ! [*DOROTHY laughs and nods.*] Well, what young women are coming to, I don't know.

DOROTHY.

Oh, people always say that. I suppose they always will, and [*sighing*] we never do anything very shocking after all. Anyhow, it's Ursula, not me. I wonder if the trick can have succeeded ?

MRS. FENTON.

Pray let me hear no more about it.

DOROTHY.

Very well. [*She sits L. C. and yawns.*] Where's Frank, too ? Oh, how dull it is !

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M R S. F E N T O N.

What is this disgraceful trick, Dorothy ?

D O R O T H Y.

Well, you told me not to talk about it, but it's — it's so amusing. [*Rises and crosses to Mrs. F.*] Oh, but you'll betray it to Frank !

M R S. F E N T O N.

I won't, indeed I won't.

D O R O T H Y.

[*Laughing.*] I believe you like a joke after all, Aunt. Well, Ursula has wagered me that she'll gain admission to Sir George's house.

M R S. F E N T O N.

Well !

D O R O T H Y.

Just to make him break his oath, you know. She's gone out walking with Quilton — he's devoted to her and will do anything she tells him — and when she comes to Sir George's gates, she'll turn faint, and Quilton will help her up the avenue, and ring the bell, and Ursula will sink down on the doorstep and then ——

M R S. F E N T O N.

[*Severely.*] Well, and then ?

D O R O T H Y.

Oh, then I've wagered he won't ask her to walk in, and she's wagered he will. Oh, which do you think he'll do, Aunt ? The wager is six pairs of the finest silk stockings; and I have no money, and I can't ask Frank for them, can I ? Not yet, I mean.

M R S. F E N T O N.

And if Ursula does force her way in in this fashion ?

DOROTHY.

Oh, if she does make her way in,—well, I shouldn't wonder if she went again.

MRS. FENTON.

If I had known that such escapades were to go on, I'd never have brought you here. I hope, Dorothy, that when you're married [*DOROTHY goes up to the window*] you will exert an influence for good on your sister-in-law.

DOROTHY.

[*Absently—looking out of the window.*] Yes, I will, Aunt.

MRS. FENTON.

You have been genteelly and religiously brought up.

DOROTHY.

[*As before.*] Yes, I have, Aunt. [*Mrs. F. rises.*] Oh, I wonder what's happened? Do you think he'll let her in?

MRS. FENTON.

My dear, I don't take the least interest in the subject. [*Going L.*] But if I had done such a thing when I was a girl ——

DOROTHY.

[*Laughing.*] Sir George wouldn't have let you in, Aunt?

MRS. FENTON.

I said nothing of the kind, Dorothy. Why are you laughing, pray?

DOROTHY.

At the idea, Aunt. [*Mrs. F. looks severely at her and goes off L.*] Never mind, I don't think she'll tell Frank. [*Runs to window.*] Oh, there's Ursula! [*Glances at clock.*] She can't have got in—it's too early. Then I've won the wager. Now what colour shall I have my stockings?

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[Enter URSULA L. *She seems out of breath and agitated.*
Crosses and throws herself into chair R. by fire and sits
silent. DOROTHY comes down C.]

DOROTHY.

You've lost, you've lost, Ursula ! Now, this time, positively
you must pay the stakes, I wagered you six pairs of the finest ——

LADY URSULA.

Oh, do be quiet. I'm not thinking of stockings. I'd give sixty
pairs to be out of this business. [*Jumping up and coming to Dor-*
othy.] A terrible thing has happened, Dorothy.

DOROTHY.

A terrible thing ? Why, what ?

LADY URSULA.

[*Impressively.*] If Frank is dead by this time to-morrow, it
will be my fault.

DOROTHY.

Frank dead—dead by this time to-morrow ! Oh, what do you
mean ?

LADY URSULA.

I'll tell you all about it — [*Pathetically.*] Oh, try, try not to
hate me, darling.

DOROTHY.

Tell me what you mean about Frank.

LADY URSULA.

I am telling you — only you interrupt me. I went there — to
that odious man's, you know — as — as we arranged ; and ——

DOROTHY.

We didn't arrange, it was all your idea.

L A D Y U R S U L A.

Well, you incited me.

D O R O T H Y.

No, I dissuaded you.

L A D Y U R S U L A.

You wagered ——

D O R O T H Y.

That was to dissuade you. Oh, but do go on !

L A D Y U R S U L A.

Oh, you'll be against me, of course ! I don't care. I couldn't foresee what would happen. It was just the unluckiest ——

D O R O T H Y.

Are you never going on ?

L A D Y U R S U L A.

The very moment you'll be quiet and let me !

D O R O T H Y.

Quiet ! How can I be quiet when Frank's in peril of ——

L A D Y U R S U L A.

Very well. [*A pause. They look defiantly at one another.*]

D O R O T H Y.

Oh, go on, then.

L A D Y U R S U L A.

I went there and —— and I fainted. I'd planned everything with Quilton most perfectly. He helped me up the avenue and left me —— drooping —— on a seat. Then he went to the door and gave my compliments, said I was ill, and begged leave to rest myself for a little while before I resumed my walk. The servant shut

the door, we waited, he came back with the answer — Sir George Sylvester presents his compliments to Lady Ursula Barrington and ——

DOROTHY.

Would she honour him by stepping in ?

LADY URSULA.

No ! Would she take a glass of wine !

DOROTHY.

Well, well, Ursula ?

LADY URSULA.

I sent again. My compliments, I was obliged to Sir George, but I needed nothing except a few moments' rest on a sofa. Although in truth I was by then ashamed to go in, for my cheeks were as red as Frank's uniform coat.

DOROTHY.

And what answer did he send to that ?

LADY URSULA.

Sir George's compliments. He regretted that his establishment did not admit of his receiving ladies, but he begged me to consider the porter's lodge at my disposal and to rest there so long as I might be inclined.

DOROTHY.

The porter's lodge !

LADY URSULA.

The porter's lodge.

DOROTHY.

What barbarity ! But you've lost the wager, Ursula.

LADY URSULA.

Oh, that for the wager ! How am I to tell you, Dorothy ? Now comes the dreadful thing.

DOROTHY.

About Frank?

L A D Y U R S U L A.

Yes, about Frank. Just at that moment, as the devil would have it — [*A movement from DOROTHY.*] Oh, I know, my dear, but it was the devil, if ever anything was — just at that moment who should come riding by but Frank! He saw me on the seat in the avenue and Quilton still by the door. “What’s this?” he calls — off his horse in a moment! And that silly old Quilton — I suppose he thought he was helping me — told him that I was ill and had asked leave to rest, but that Sir George had told me to go to — to the porter’s lodge. You know Frank’s temper — at least you will soon —

DOROTHY.

Frank’s the sweetest-tempered —

L A D Y U R S U L A.

Oh, sweet as gunpowder, my dear, and twice as quick. When he heard those words — porter’s lodge — a Barrington sent to the porter’s lodge — he blazed out in an instant — ordered me off home (on my soul, I forgot to go on being faint!) — and sent Quilton with a message that Sir George was no gentleman, that Sir George had insulted his sister, that an insult to his sister was an insult to him, that Sir George used to know, even if he had ceased to practise, the rules of conduct common among gentlemen — and that — Oh, there was plenty more, but the sum of it all was that Sir George should hear from him.

DOROTHY.

Hear from him!

L A D Y U R S U L A.

That he’d send his seconds to him, you know. I left Frank

waiting for the answer. But of course Sir George must go out.

DOROTHY.

Go out ! Fight ! You mean — fight ?

LADY URSULA.

Yes. He doesn't want to fight, you know, because of his last affair, but he must after Frank's words.

DOROTHY.

Oh, how terrible ! [*Clutching her arm.*] Ursula, they won't fight as Joicey and McArthur fought ?

LADY URSULA.

How was that ? Oh, you mean the Dublin duel ?

DOROTHY.

Yes — across the dinner table — with only one pistol loaded, each drawing one at random.

LADY URSULA.

No, they won't fight like that. [*Shakes her head.*]

DOROTHY.

Thank Heaven for so much, at least !

LADY URSULA.

It'll be worse than that — for Frank, I mean.

Shaking her head.

DOROTHY.

Worse !

LADY URSULA.

Yes. That would be an even chance. As it is, Sir George'll have the choice of weapons — and everybody says he's the finest swordsman in London.

DOROTHY.

Oh, you wicked, wicked girl! It's all your fault because you were so — so undignified and — and forward and unladylike. Oh, what shall I do? Frank'll be killed. [*Sinks into chair by window and sobs.* URSULA *sits and looks rigidly in front of her.* *A pause.*]

[*Enter QUILTON L. breathless and in haste. He stands looking at them.*]

LADY URSULA.

So, you may suppose, I'm not thinking much about your stockings.

QUILTON.

Beg pardon, my lady. Sir George sends word that my lord may send his friends as soon as my lord pleases, and Sir George will be pleased to name his.

DOROTHY.

Oh!

LADY URSULA.

Where is my brother, Quilton?

QUILTON.

On his way here, my lady, he is anxious to see and console your ladyship.

LADY URSULA.

Console me!

DOROTHY.

Console her!

QUILTON.

He'll be here directly. Beg your ladyship's pardon — shall I say that your ladyship is better?

LADY URSULA.

No, Quilton, worse, worse. [*QUILTON goes off.* URSULA

looks at DOROTHY, rises and sighs.] I must tell Frank the truth, that's all. [*Pause.*] And he must tell Sir George and apologize for what he said under a misapprehension. Perhaps that will prevent the meeting.

DOROTHY.

What will Sir George think of you?

LADY URSULA.

I suppose he'll think me the most ill-bred and impudent girl he ever heard of.

DOROTHY.

Yes, that's exactly what he'll think.

LADY URSULA.

I don't care. I'd do anything sooner than let them fight. [*A pause.*] You might pity me a little, Dorothy, I'm very unhappy. [*Sits R.*

DOROTHY.

Pity you! I'll keep my pity for my poor dear Frank!

LADY URSULA.

How perversely things happen! It was no more than a little jest of mine, and ——

[*Enter HASSENDEN L. DOROTHY runs over to him and throws her arms round his neck.*]

DOROTHY.

Oh, darling Frank, must you fight this awful man?

HASSENDEN.

[*Tenderly.*] Yes, dear, I must go out with him. Don't fear for me. I can take care of myself. [*Leaves her and comes to URSULA. Lays hand on her chair and bends over her.*] My poor insulted sister!

L A D Y U R S U L A.

Don't kiss me !

D O R O T H Y.

Poor insulted sister, indeed !

[*Comes down L.*

H A S S E N D E N.

[*Looking from one to the other.*] Why — what do you mean ?

D O R O T H Y.

Oh, I'll leave Ursula to tell you herself.

H A S S E N D E N.

To tell me what ?

D O R O T H Y.

What she has done.

H A S S E N D E N.

If there's anything to tell, pray tell me quickly. I'm on guard to-night and must leave for town immediately. I need not add that I have fresh business on hand now.

L A D Y U R S U L A.

[*Rising.*] Frank, there must be no meeting between Sir George Sylvester and you over this matter.

H A S S E N D E N.

But, by Heaven, there must ! The challenge is given and accepted. Neither can draw back.

L A D Y U R S U L A.

There must be no meeting on account of the way in which Sir George used me. What he did was less than my deserts. I was playing a trick on him. [*Hassenden starts and is about to speak.*] Oh, you need say nothing ! You needn't tell me what you think of me. I wanted to have a laugh against him. He

refuses to admit a woman to his house. I tried to procure entrance by pretending a fit of faintness. Well, I failed, I did not get in; he sent me to the porter's lodge.

H A S S E N D E N.

Is this true, Ursula?

L A D Y U R S U L A.

Yes, it is all true. I tried and I failed. There the matter would have ended, if you hadn't chanced to come by.

H A S S E N D E N.

As I did chance to come by, there it does not end. It ends and must end — elsewhere.

D O R O T H Y.

But, Frank, you can tell him —

L A D Y U R S U L A.

You can explain that your words —

H A S S E N D E N.

Sir George Sylvester is too fine a swordsman for his opponent to be very ready with apologies.

D O R O T H Y.

Oh, that's just a man's senseless reason!

H A S S E N D E N.

Ah, Dorothy, and what is to be my apology? What's my excuse? [*Holds DOROTHY's hand and turns to URSULA.*] That I have a sister — Lady Ursula Barrington — whose habit it is to force her acquaintance on gentlemen who do not desire it and her way into their houses when they do not invite her. [*URSULA stands quite still. A pause.*] Shall I be welcome among my brother-officers with these excuses on my lips?

DOROTHY.

But they'll understand ——

H A S S E N D E N.

Believe me, if I sheltered myself behind such a plea, it is not one but twenty quarrels that I should have on my hands.

DOROTHY.

Oh, and it was my fault, too, because I ——

L A D Y U R S U L A.

Stop! It was my fault and mine only. The trick was entirely of my devising.

H A S S E N D E N.

A pretty trick, indeed. A very pretty trick. It might have cost your reputation, it is likely to cost only my life. [*Turns to DOROTHY.*] Good-bye, dearest. Hush, not a word! I must go. I will see you again before —— before anything further happens. Good-bye. [*Kissing her. Goes up L. Pauses, turns and looks at URSULA.*] You have one more brother. Pray indulge yourself in one more such trick. Good-day to you. [*Bows and goes off L. DOROTHY sits L. and cries. URSULA still stands without movement. A pause.*]

L A D Y U R S U L A.

What's the use of crying? Tears are no armour for Frank, tears won't turn Sir George's sword. We can do nothing —— so let us laugh. Let us laugh, Dolly. Isn't it ludicrous in truth? A mad girl plays a mad trick and a brave gentleman, her dear brother, dies for it. Isn't it laughable? [*Walks to window, looks out for a moment.*] It's growing dusk. [*Goes L. and stands before the mirror. DOROTHY lifts her head and looks at URSULA.*]

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A pause.] Well, if Frank won't tell the truth, I will tell it to Sir George myself.

DOROTHY.

[*Leaning forward.*] Ursula! You'll write to him?

LADY URSULA.

[*Looking in mirror.*] No, he would not mind a letter. [*Taking a step back, smiling a little and striking an attitude.*] No, I shall fare better — face to face. I'll go to him.

DOROTHY.

Go to him? Oh, and plead with him?

LADY URSULA.

Yes — [*She arranges her hair and dances a step or two before the mirror*] and plead with him.

DOROTHY.

[*Rising and leaning her elbow on the sill of the window.*] But — but how are you going to get at him? [*Ursula wheels around suddenly.*] You can't waylay him in the street, you can't go faint again — and if you did he would — he would only send his compliments and make you welcome to — the porter's lodge!

LADY URSULA.

I'll effect an entrance if — if I have to kiss the footman! [*Turns an instant to mirror and looks. Then smiling turns again and goes up to DOROTHY.*] Take heart, Dolly, dear Dolly. Your *beau* shan't be killed nor my cruel brother either. [*Comes down.*] Oh, if only Walter were here and not in France! He could help me.

DOROTHY.

[*Following her down.*] Walter! What could he do? Except be second to Frank in the duel?

LADY URSULA.

Why, he could go to Sir George and tell him what Frank won't tell him. Oh, to be a man for an hour! [*Pause.*] Walter could get in. I can't. Unless — [*Glances at window. It is growing dusk*] — unless in the dark I were mistaken for a man.

DOROTHY.

What's the use of talking in that fashion? Mistake you for a man!
[*Sits R.*]

LADY URSULA.

[*Going up to window.*] It's growing dark. [*She turns and looks at DOROTHY.*] I'm a good height, I can bear myself upright. I'm like Walter. Walter's chin is still smooth enough. [*Comes down quickly to DOROTHY.*] I'm going to help Frank — will you help him — help him by helping me? Oh, I know what may be said if I'm found out. What do I care, if I can prevent this duel? Dolly, will you help me?

DOROTHY.

How, in what? Only tell me!

LADY URSULA.

By keeping my secret and by being on the lookout to let me in when I come back.

DOROTHY.

Let you in? Are you going out? [*Rising.*] To Sir George's again, Ursula?

LADY URSULA.

Yes, to Sir George's again! Will you do what I ask of you — will you, Dolly?
[*Catches her hands.*]

DOROTHY.

[*Drawing back.*] I'll do anything to help Frank.

LADY URSULA.

[*Reproachfully.*] And nothing to help me now? [*Smiling.*] But I'll win your love again — and to punish you I'll win the stockings after all. No, you shall kiss me. [*Kisses DOROTHY. DOROTHY is reluctant, but at last kisses her, laughing a little. URSULA runs L. calling.*] Quilton, Quilton! [*She stands before mirror, assumes jaunty attitude and draws her skirt above and away from her feet. Drops skirt hastily, turns away, and comes down C. as QUILTON enters carrying a large flat box. He sets it down by window as URSULA speaks to him.*] Has my lord gone to town yet?

QUILTON.

He has just set out, my lady. He hopes to be back in the early morning.

LADY URSULA.

[*Going to him.*] Dear old Quilton, I'm in a great trouble.

QUILTON.

There's nothing new in that.

LADY URSULA.

And it's by my own fault.

QUILTON.

Nor in that, neither. But you'll coax your way out of it — and there'll be nothing new in that, neither.

LADY URSULA.

Shall I, Quilton? Not unless you help me.

QUILTON.

Ah, and there'll be nothing new in that, neither. I remember well enough when you were a naughty little girl —

L A D Y U R S U L A.

For heaven's sake, don't remember that. Indeed, you remember it too often. Tell me, what suits of Mr. Walter's have you here? [*DOROTHY looks up startled and listens.*] Most of his I know he took with him to France.

Q U I L T O N.

Why, my lady, for what reason do you desire to know?

L A D Y U R S U L A.

Oh, never mind why. Tell me, tell me. Dolly, come here and listen.

D O R O T H Y.

[*Rising and coming to center, R. of QUILTON who is between them.*] But why in the world are you ——?

L A D Y U R S U L A.

If either of you love me, no more questions. The suits, Quilton! Dear Quilton, the suits!

Q U I L T O N.

Well, God knows the ways of your mind, my lady! Well, then, there's the black slashed with red.

L A D Y U R S U L A.

Oh, I'm not going to play the devil in Dr. Faustus.

Q U I L T O N.

There's the white and gold.

L A D Y U R S U L A.

Alas, I'm not going to a wedding.

Q U I L T O N.

There's the buff and violet.

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L A D Y U R S U L A .

I should be like a Whig in mourning.

Q U I L T O N .

There's the sage-green.

L A D Y U R S U L A .

I am not wise — and I have no man yet to be jealous of.

D O R O T H Y .

But, Ursula —

L A D Y U R S U L A .

Hush, you'll understand directly — and I have your promise of secrecy.

Q U I L T O N .

There's the pink.

L A D Y U R S U L A .

Oh, it kills my face. Are there no more ?

Q U I L T O N .

No more, my lady.

L A D Y U R S U L A .

That ever my plan should be balked like this ! For I'd better not go at all than go in a colour that doesn't become me.

D O R O T H Y .

[*Clasping her hands.*] Oh, I understand ! Ursula, how shall you — ? [*Falls back a little.*]

L A D Y U R S U L A .

Is there absolutely no other, Quilton ?

Q U I L T O N .

None, my lady, except —

D O R O T H Y .

[*Looks round at box.*] What's this ? [*Runs to it, picks it up*]

and comes C. Reads address on it.] To the Honourable Walter Barrington at Edgware. [*Looks at URSULA and reads again.*] The suit as commanded in pale blue with silver.

QUILTON.

It's Mr. Walter's new suit, my lady — ordered for the ball at the Ambassador's in Paris. I brought the box here that your ladyship might write the French address on it for me.

L A D Y U R S U L A.

Pale blue and silver ! Oh, Dolly, the colours become me to a marvel — what a blessed chance !

QUILTON.

It must go to Paris at once, my lady.

L A D Y U R S U L A.

It must go first to Sir George Sylvester's !

QUILTON.

To Sir George Sylvester's ! And who's to go in it then ?

L A D Y U R S U L A.

Why, I am, Quilton. [*QUILTON chuckles.*] Oh, laugh away, but I'll do it. Give me the box, Dolly. [*Takes it.*] And, Quilton, you must dress my hair. [*She goes to table and unfastens box.*]

QUILTON.

God save us, and what'll my lord say ?

D O R O T H Y.

My lord mustn't know.

QUILTON.

And what'll Mr. Walter say ?

L A D Y U R S U L A.

Dolly, Dolly, see, here's the coat — a beautiful coat ! [*DORO-*

THY runs to her. URSULA hands coat to DOROTHY. QUILTON stands a moment, laughing again. URSULA takes out waistcoat.]

QUILTON.

[Going L.] She's going to wear the breeches ! [Goes off L. laughing and shaking his head.]

LADY URSULA.

[Coming L. centre.] And what a waistcoat !

DOROTHY.

Yes — and —— [She takes out the breeches, unfolds them and holds them up.] Look at the —— !

LADY URSULA.

Oh, the —— ! [Runs across to DOROTHY. Both examine the breeches, laughing. URSULA holds them in front of her gown. DOROTHY laughs and claps her hands. While they are thus engaged Mrs. FENTON enters L. and stands a moment looking.]

MRS. FENTON.

What are you doing ? What have you there ? [Comes down L.]

LADY URSULA.

[Nudging DOROTHY.] Only — only Walter's new clothes, Mrs. Fenton.

DOROTHY.

Yes, only — only Walter's new clothes, Aunt.

LADY URSULA.

They've just come home, they're for the Ambassador's ball at Paris.

DOROTHY.

They have to go to Paris at once. Aren't they pretty ?

L A D Y U R S U L A.

We were just looking at them — and — and seeing whether they — I mean hoping they would fit, you know.

M R S. F E N T O N.

Hum! A nice employment for young women. Pray, do ladies usually scrutinize gentlemen's clothes, to see whether they fit? '

L A D Y U R S U L A.

Only — only when the gentleman's inside them, as a rule, I suppose.

M R S. F E N T O N.

It was not the custom in my girlhood.

D O R O T H Y.

No, I suppose not, Aunt.

M R S. F E N T O N.

Come, dears, fold them neatly and put them away. As for you, Ursula, I have heard of your proceedings. You should be ashamed of yourself.

L A D Y U R S U L A.

Indeed I am. Fold up the coat, Dorothy. Oh, yes, I am, Mrs. Fenton. [*Takes breeches.*] I'll fold these.

M R S. F E N T O N.

And now you're looking at a gentleman's clothes! Well, I suppose you'll be trying them on next. [*URSULA and DOROTHY look at one another and laugh.*]

L A D Y U R S U L A.

Trying them on! Oh, fie, Mrs. Fenton! Do be quick and put them back in the box, Dorothy. [*Mrs. F. goes up to the window and looks out. URSULA again makes as though to measure the breeches. Mrs. F. turns round and URSULA begins to fold*

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them hastily.] Oh, Dorothy, don't crease the coat, or I shall — I — I mean — or Walter will look ——— [*She still holds the breeches.*]

MRS. FENTON.

Come with me, Dorothy. I want you to write a letter for me.

[*Goes L.*]

DOROTHY.

I'll come in an instant, Aunt.

MRS. FENTON.

And do endeavor to conduct yourselves with more gentility.

[*Goes off L.*]

LADY URSULA.

[*Crossing L.*] Oh, I'll conduct myself with infinite gentility. Dolly, I will be the finest gallant in the town! You shan't see me for fear you forsake poor Frank and fall in love with me all in a moment.

DOROTHY.

You'll wear them? You'll go in them to Sir George?

LADY URSULA.

I will.

DOROTHY.

And, Ursula, can you — ah, can you prevent a duel?

LADY URSULA.

A duel! [*Coming to her.*] No, Dolly, I can't prevent a duel.

DOROTHY.

Then what's the use of — ?

LADY URSULA.

There must be a duel.

DOROTHY.

And Frank will be killed — !

LADY URSULA.

No, Frank will not be killed.

DOROTHY.

But how, how ?

LADY URSULA.

[*Putting one arm round DOROTHY's waist and holding up the breeches in the other hand.*] There must be a duel — but — I will fight it with Sir George !

CURTAIN





ACT II

SIR GEORGE SYLVESTER'S *house at Edgware — eight p.m. The dining-room — doors up L., down R. At back a large window in a recess with curtains drawn across. Centre L., a small polished table with decanters and glasses. SYLVESTER, BLIMBOE and CASTLETON are at table. BLIMBOE smokes a long clay. CASTLETON in riding dress, SYLVESTER in undress.*

BLIMBOE.



O fight in a private quarrel is a sin, to break an oath is a sin, and ——

CASTLETON.

On my soul to refuse to see a pretty girl — whether in or out of a faint, I care not — is a heinous sin.

SYLVESTER.

Then I'm damned three times over. For I would not see her and I will not. Fight I will ; and to fight I must break my oath.

CASTLETON.

The oath had no sense, George, no consistency, no harmony of its members. For to keep the part concerning women was bound to run you into a discourtesy ——

BLIMBOE.

True, Mr. Castleton ; very well put, sir.

CASTLETON.

And from discourtesy follows fighting as pat as one kiss from another.

BLIMBOE.

Yet the Scriptures tell us ——

CASTLETON.

Ah, we live in other times — and a man cannot be at odds with his times.

BLIMBOE.

The case is difficult, I own.

SYLVESTER.

[*Laughing.*] For a parson who loves fighting, it's mighty difficult. [*Claps BLIMBOE on the shoulder.*] This fellow's a glutton for it in his heart. But for his cloth we should none of us be safe. [*Sighing.*] But I regret this affair. Hassenden's a good fellow, though he's over hot in the head — and, plague take it, when I see my man opposite me, I'm bound to use my knowledge.

BLIMBOE.

You need do no more than touch him — the wrist, say, or somewhere safe in the arm. This isn't a Joicey and McArthur business.

CASTLETON.

No — no more of that butchery, in heaven's name.

SYLVESTER.

He offered me most direct insults, and I love a neat thrust, Jack.



CASTLETON.

That you did always. But — does the oath hold good except for Hassenden?

SYLVESTER.

For you, anyhow. Say what you will.

CASTLETON.

Then give me leave to tell you you're a fool. Ah, make as many vows to women as you like, but none about them.

BLIMBOE.

Now pray, sir, why so?

CASTLETON.

Because the keeping of the first depends on your own mind, and the keeping of the second depends mainly on theirs. [*To SYLVESTER.*] Besides, man, I hear that the lady whom you would have sent to your porter's lodge is to be the *belle* of London — the prettiest creature, they say, in all the town. She passed the season in York and broke more hearts than they break heads at a Westminster election.

BLIMBOE.

The more reason to restrict her to the porter's lodge.

CASTLETON.

I grant you that — from the porter's point of view.

SYLVESTER.

And from mine, also.

CASTLETON.

Ugliness may produce a virtue — a soldier with no legs can't run away — but hang me, George, if it be one — or if it is, the world is nine-tenths virtuous already!

B L I M B O E.

There is no virtue, sir, where there is no temptation.

C A S T L E T O N.

And where there is temptation, there remains very little virtue. If a man desires to be righteous — why, the world is badly ordered for him. But I wish you'd seen her, George.

B L I M B O E.

You won't kill the young lord, Sir George? He's to be married in a month to a most engaging young lady.

S Y L V E S T E R.

Hum! I come in the nick of time to save him. Death is to marriage as the *coup de grace* to slow torture.

C A S T L E T O N.

Ah, but they say fanatics feel no pain.

S Y L V E S T E R.

Then I anend — better death than madness.

B L I M B O E.

The Holy Martyrs were not mad.

S Y L V E S T E R.

They were leaving their wives behind them — and going to a place where in most cases they wouldn't meet them again.

B L I M B O E.

Gentlemen, gentlemen! Marriage is of Divine foundation.

S Y L V E S T E R.

May be. But when a building is complete, the foundations are not visible.

C A S T L E T O N.

She's tall, they say, and very slender. I like 'em like willows,

George. Her eye is blue, her cheek not so red but that you have good excuse for making it redder, her mouth not so small as to stint a man nor yet so large as to discourage him from seeking to cover it, her ear ——

S Y L V E S T E R.

In Heaven's name, who's the text for this rhapsody?

C A S T L E T O N.

Oh, it's only a part of what is reported of the lady whom you sent to your porter's lodge. I trust you asked leave of the porter's wife?

S Y L V E S T E R.

The porter, thank God, is a bachelor.

C A S T L E T O N.

George, I think I'll be your porter. Give this fellow his congé and take me in his place. [*Rising.*] Well, fight you will and kiss you won't? So it stands, does it?

S Y L V E S T E R.

Yes, I must be content to keep half my oath. At least it is the better half.

C A S T L E T O N.

Well, since I can't help you in one, I'd help you in the other — but Hassenden's of my company and my friend.

S Y L V E S T E R.

I know, Jack. I'll ask Giles Marsh to act for me.

B L I M B O E.

But can there be no explanation, no apology?

S Y L V E S T E R.

None; the affair has gone too far.

C A S T L E T O N .

Swords, I suppose ?

S Y L V E S T E R .

Without doubt. I was the challenged party.

C A S T L E T O N .

Well, Heaven bring you both safe out of it. Good-night, George.

S Y L V E S T E R .

[*Rising.*] Good-night. I'll find you at your lodgings to-morrow. We don't meet till the next day, because Hassenden is on guard to-night and his eye might be out.

C A S T L E T O N .

Then you've full leisure for the arrangements. But come up to-night, George. What is there to keep you here ?

S Y L V E S T E R .

Nothing, yet I'll stay. I'm not dressed — and I'm not in the mood for company.

C A S T L E T O N .

As you like. But if you change your mind, there's a bed at my lodgings and I'll leave word where I'm to be found if I go out. [*Going L.*] Good-night to you, Mr. Blimboe.

B L I M B O E .

[*Bowing.*] Sir, your obedient servant.

C A S T L E T O N .

[*Pausing.*] I wish you'd let her in, George. On my life, I long to see her !

S Y L V E S T E R .

Ah, I don't. Till to-morrow, then !

C A S T L E T O N.

I still hope for to-night. [*He goes off L.* SYLVESTER *pours out glass of wine. They sit again.*]

B L I M B O E.

I also wish that you had seen her, if she be all Mr. Castleton says.

S Y L V E S T E R.

You wish it?

B L I M B O E.

Yes. Whether for sin or for sorrow you have grieved long enough.

S Y L V E S T E R.

You're a good friend. But I can't bring myself to think of a woman.

B L I M B O E.

You'd have said the same of a sword last night.

S Y L V E S T E R.

Aye, I'm a fool — if that helps the matter.

B L I M B O E.

[*Rising.*] Well, it will be little use if you kill her brother — still, when we meet again I'll tell you what she is in truth like.

S Y L V E S T E R.

You'll tell me? Shall you see her, then?

B L I M B O E.

She's of my parish — thanks to you — and it is my duty to see her. I waited on her this afternoon, but saw only the lady who is to marry my lord, and her Aunt. Lady Ursula was out.

S Y L V E S T E R.

Oh, yes, Lady Ursula was out. I know that well enough!

BLIMBOE.

So I go to-night to drink tea and then make acquaintance with her.

SYLVESTER.

Not a word of this matter—in case Hassenden hasn't mentioned it.

BLIMBOE.

You may trust me in that.

SYLVESTER.

But I hoped you'd bear me company through the evening. What shall I do to pass my time? Must I sit and think of this wonderful lady?

BLIMBOE.

Or of the duel you are to fight?

SYLVESTER.

Plague take it, no! I'll go to town and find Jack. That'll be better than my thoughts. [*Rises.*] Good-night, old friend. [*They shake hands.*] I wish most heartily this hadn't happened. [*BLIMBOE is about to speak.*] No, it's too late. [*BLIMBOE goes off L. SYLVESTER sits moodily by table. A pause.*] Eyes blue—her cheeks not so red——! What was that nonsense of Jack Castleton's? Well, I hope the boy can use his blade a little. On my life, I believe I shouldn't care if he used it better than I used mine.

[*Sighs and yawns.*]

[*Enter MILLS R.*]

MILLS.

The gardener you wished to see is in waiting, Sir George.

SYLVESTER.

Let him come in, then.

MILLS.

He's been at work among the manure and his feet —— [*Looks at carpet.*]

SYLVESTER.

[*Laughing.*] Oh, you're careful for the carpets. [*Rises.*] Well, I'll see him in the kitchen. [*Goes R. and pauses.*] I may go to town to-night. Be prepared, and set out the black suit. And let the chaise be ready and a horse stood in his harness.

MILLS.

Yes, Sir George. [*SYLVESTER goes off, followed by MILLS R. A short pause.*]

[*Enter a FOOTMAN L. ushering in URSULA. She wears the blue and silver suit, a large hat, a man's wig and a long cloak folded close round her. She looks round hastily and, on seeing nobody, sighs as though in relief, and comes down L.*]

SERVANT.

[*Going R.*] I will inform Sir George of your presence, sir. What name, sir?

L A D Y U R S U L A.

Mr. Walter Barrington. You may add that I come on Lord Hassenden's business.

SERVANT.

Yes, sir. Will you be seated? [*Brings chair.*] May I remove your cloak, sir?

L A D Y U R S U L A.

[*Starting.*] Remove my cloak? No, no, it's—I'm cold. Pray go at once. [*SERVANT goes off. URSULA stands still till he is gone and then draws a breath.*] Well, here I am in the house

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—in very truth in the house ! And but for Frank's sake I'd most heartily wish myself anywhere else in the world—even where I ought to be—at home with the parson—that must have been he whom I passed on the road. [*Smiling.*] But I'm in ! I've won the stockings from Dorothy ! Oh, don't let me think of—[*Opens cloak*] stockings—or I'm lost ! Here comes somebody ! [*Hastily folds cloak again as SYLVESTER enters R. Both bow low.*]

S Y L V E S T E R.

I am Sir George Sylvester, sir, at your service.

L A D Y U R S U L A.

I—I come, sir——

S Y L V E S T E R.

On behalf of Lord Hassenden, if I understood your message rightly. Indeed, sir, I regret that you have been put to this trouble, but—— Ah, I live so much alone that I forget all courtesies. Pray, be seated, sir.

L A D Y U R S U L A.

I thank you, sir.

[*Moves toward chair L. C.*]

S Y L V E S T E R.

And allow me to assist you to remove your cloak.

L A D Y U R S U L A.

No, no. I'm not hot. Indeed, I'm——

S Y L V E S T E R.

I insist, indeed I must insist. [*Goes to her and takes off cloak, flinging it on a chair by the table.*] Now, pray be seated and let me offer you a glass of wine.

L A D Y U R S U L A.

I thank you again, but no wine, sir.

S Y L V E S T E R.

I was about to express my regret that you had put yourself to the pains of this visit. I understood that the — er — affair was to be carried through in town — such things make so much less talk in town — and that the arrangements would be made there. My friend, Mr. Marsh, who acts for me, is there already. If it isn't inconvenient to you, Mr. Barrington — by the way, you're Lord Hassenden's brother, I presume?

L A D Y U R S U L A.

Yes — his younger brother.

S Y L V E S T E R.

[*Sitting.*] So I suppose, sir, from your style no less [*Looking at her*] than your appearance. I heard you were in France.

L A D Y U R S U L A.

I have returned only this evening — and — and I go back there immediately.

S Y L V E S T E R.

Permit me to say, if I do not commit a breach of etiquette, how deeply I regret that such business as this should await you on your arrival. However, such discussion as is necessary — none, I fear, can be fruitful — you will prefer to conduct with my friend.

L A D Y U R S U L A.

No, I — I want to talk to you.

S Y L V E S T E R.

Forgive me, but had we not best be regular? Mr. Marsh acts on my behalf, you act on your brother's —

L A D Y U R S U L A.

No, sir, you're mistaken. I act on my own behalf.

SYLVESTER.

I beg your pardon? I didn't catch your meaning. I have, alas! much experience, and in that your age doesn't enable you to rival me. Your visit, sir, is not regular, if you act for your brother. If you come on business of your own, your visit, however great an honour to me, is ill-timed. [*Rises.*] Is your chaise in waiting?

LADY URSULA.

[*Rising.*] Sir George!

SYLVESTER.

Sir!

LADY URSULA.

Is what they tell of you true?

SYLVESTER.

What they tell of a man is seldom true — except when it's evil.

LADY URSULA.

That when you met the friend whom you killed —

SYLVESTER.

It was by the unluckiest chance —

LADY URSULA.

[*Stopping him.*] He had sent to you a gentleman known to you both, charged to effect a reconciliation — and that you would not speak with the gentleman?

SYLVESTER.

Yes, it is true.

[*A pause.*]

LADY URSULA.

My chaise is waiting, sir. Shall I go to it?

SYLVESTER.

[*Coldly.*] Sit down and state your business — briefly, if I may

beg that favour. If your brother can use his sword as well as you can your tongue, he needs no intercession. [*Sits, resting his head on his hand.*]

L A D Y U R S U L A.

[*Impulsively.*] Ah, forgive me, I — [*Recollecting herself*] I should say that I am not here to intercede for my brother. [*SYLVESTER looks up. URSULA sits L. of table.*] Yet I am here to intercede.

S Y L V E S T E R.

My quarrel is with your brother — with nobody else.

L A D Y U R S U L A.

I think, sir, you don't know — my sister?

S Y L V E S T E R.

As you must be aware, I have no acquaintance with Lady Ursula Barrington.

L A D Y U R S U L A.

And you desire none?

S Y L V E S T E R.

I must plead guilty to your charge; the present situation proves it against me.

L A D Y U R S U L A.

Oh, no need for an apology. I assure you she is fully as unwilling to meet you.

S Y L V E S T E R.

I believe it undoubtedly — illness alone drove her to my inhospitable door. And now she takes her brother's part? Or is it her own grievance? I may say to you, sir, what your brother's hasty violence forbade and must forbid me to say to him. My refusal to admit your sister was not personal to her; the same message would have come to any lady. My desires are well

known, why am I not free to indulge them? [*Rising and going down R. then turning.*] You will say your sister was faint. [*Shrugging his shoulders.*] Well, I offered ——

LADY URSULA.

No, sir, I shall say no such thing. My sister was not faint.

SYLVESTER.

[*Starting and looking at her.*] Not faint?

LADY URSULA.

How can I tell you?

SYLVESTER.

[*Coming and sitting again.*] What can you have to tell me?

LADY URSULA.

It grieves me as deeply to speak to her discredit as to my own.

SYLVESTER.

I understand your feelings, sir ——

LADY URSULA.

Do you, indeed? Well, here it is. You and my brother are common victims of one — of one — do you know anything of women?

SYLVESTER.

[*Smiling.*] I have passed my years like a fool, or a monk, if I don't know more than you.

LADY URSULA.

Have you read the story of Bluebeard?

SYLVESTER.

A wise man — but given to repeating hopeless experiments.

LADY URSULA.

Yet you imitated him. You set up his secret room anew.

S Y L V E S T E R.

I didn't give the key to any lady.

L A D Y U R S U L A.

No, you improved on the model ; you dared any lady to find the key.

S Y L V E S T E R.

[*Leaning forward.*] Your sister tried ?

L A D Y U R S U L A.

Yes. I am here to confess it for her.

S Y L V E S T E R.

Her faintness —— ?

L A D Y U R S U L A.

A trick to gain admission.

S Y L V E S T E R.

[*Smiling.*] It seems, then, that she did desire my acquaintance.

L A D Y U R S U L A.

Oh, a whim, the merest whim. And indeed I wonder at it as much as you do ! [*A pause.*]

S Y L V E S T E R.

Well, she tried — but failed. So she needn't lose her head.

L A D Y U R S U L A.

No. She need only break her heart.

S Y L V E S T E R.

For not seeing me ? I protest that my attractions don't warrant ——

L A D Y U R S U L A.

No — for causing her brother's death. Your skill, sir, is well known.

SYLVESTER.

Skill is a bad possession if it requires a man to sit down under insults.

LADY URSULA.

Yes, but your true quarrel is with my sister. Come, had she been in very truth faint, wasn't your message discourteous and my brother's anger just?

SYLVESTER.

You plead well; but then you confess that she was not faint.

LADY URSULA.

Aye, but my brother believed that she was. Your quarrel, I say, is with her.

SYLVESTER.

Hum! So far as she made a fool of him as well as of me ——

LADY URSULA.

Of you! No. She — she didn't come near enough. Well, if you fight with ladies, you have a good quarrel. But must you kill her brother to punish her?

SYLVESTER.

Lord Hassenden hasn't pleaded his sister's trick as his excuse.

LADY URSULA.

I so plead it now.

SYLVESTER.

By whose desire? By his?

LADY URSULA.

Lord save us, no! By hers.

SYLVESTER.

[*With an impatient laugh.*] Well, we've both been fooled — he and I — and my lady laughs at us!

L A D Y U R S U L A.

Laughs? No — she weeps — or would weep if she were alone.

S Y L V E S T E R.

Ah, my good friend Blimboe's with her.

L A D Y U R S U L A.

I know some one is with her —

S Y L V E S T E R.

And wearies her?

L A D Y U R S U L A.

Oh, not more than she's able to endure.

S Y L V E S T E R.

He promised to bring me an account of her — though in truth I didn't ask it.

L A D Y U R S U L A.

By some she is thought — good looking.

S Y L V E S T E R.

And isn't she? You look often on her face.

L A D Y U R S U L A.

I see it less than most of her intimates.

S Y L V E S T E R.

She might well be handsome. Yes, your sister might well be beautiful — as, indeed, I hear she is. For you, sir, have a handsome face, a good shape, and [*Looking down*] a pretty leg.

L A D Y U R S U L A.

[*Drawing back her leg hastily.*] You wouldn't surely reason from mine to my sister's?

S Y L V E S T E R.

According to the philosophers, where observation is impossible we must use inference.

L A D Y U R S U L A.

Sir, I protest ——

S Y L V E S T E R.

[*Laughing.*] On my life, you're blushing !

L A D Y U R S U L A.

I'm not blushing. The —— the room is warm.

S Y L V E S T E R.

Yet you would have kept your cloak.

L A D Y U R S U L A.

I —— I should have been no hotter in it. Come, we are talking of my sister, not of my leg.

S Y L V E S T E R.

Well, have you by chance a likeness of her ? I should be very willing to see the favour of my petitioner's face.

L A D Y U R S U L A.

Oh, yes. I have a very speaking likeness of her.

S Y L V E S T E R.

Pray give it me.

L A D Y U R S U L A.

Give it you ? It's early days indeed for that ! And would you keep it ?

S Y L V E S T E R.

[*Laughing.*] Against all comers —— if once I had it for my own. But I meant only —— show it me.



L A D Y U R S U L A.

By ill-luck I have left it behind. It's in — in my wardrobe — with some other trifles that I sometimes wear.

S Y L V E S T E R.

Love tokens ? You're young, sir, to wear such trifles.

L A D Y U R S U L A.

I might call you young to have forsworn them. But I'll describe her to you — as I saw her last, standing before her mirror.

S Y L V E S T E R.

Is she often in that position ?

L A D Y U R S U L A.

So I see her most often.

S Y L V E S T E R.

She has vanity in her, then ?

L A D Y U R S U L A.

You shall hear her excuse. Her eyes are ——

S Y L V E S T E R.

I know — blue.

L A D Y U R S U L A.

Hum ! You know ? Her colour ——

S Y L V E S T E R.

Oh, moderate. Neither high nor yet pallid. Well enough, I dare say.

L A D Y U R S U L A.

Her mouth ——

S Y L V E S T E R.

Of middle size — neither so small as to be insignificant, nor so large as to be outrageous.

LADY URSULA.

Your informant, sir, is accurate in his information, if cold in his description. Pray who is he ?

SYLVESTER.

No matter. The information is his, the coldness, I fear, mine. He raved as far as beyond reason as [*Smiling*] doubtless your sister is beyond comparison.

LADY URSULA.

I know nothing of that. I love her too well to speak of her impartially.

SYLVESTER.

Is she so virtuous ?

LADY URSULA.

Such duties as she cannot avoid she does.

SYLVESTER.

So gentle ?

LADY URSULA.

A temper like a summer breeze, rising and falling.

SYLVESTER.

Hum ! So patient ?

LADY URSULA.

Of every man except a fool — and of him when no other's by.

SYLVESTER.

So decorous ?

LADY URSULA.

You would have known that if you hadn't turned her from your door.

SYLVESTER.

So loving ?

L A D Y U R S U L A.

Loving? Oh, as for that, I can't tell.

S Y L V E S T E R.

But you're her brother.

L A D Y U R S U L A.

True, true, she loves me well, very well. Of other love she knows nothing yet.

S Y L V E S T E R.

She will soon, no doubt.

L A D Y U R S U L A,

[*Eagerly.*] Do you think she will?

S Y L V E S T E R.

If she's so handsome — and as little coy as would seem to be the case.

L A D Y U R S U L A.

As little coy as — ! In faith, she's monstrously coy.

S Y L V E S T E R.

Yes — sometimes she faints for very coyness, eh? Come, you must cure her. Such coyness doesn't fit a woman of fashion. On my soul, they would take care to faint not outside your door, but well within it.

L A D Y U R S U L A.

[*Rising.*] Ah, I see that you won't forgive her.

S Y L V E S T E R.

Yes, I will.

L A D Y U R S U L A.

You will — ah, thank Heaven!

S Y L V E S T E R.

On a condition.

LADY URSULA.

Not that Frank — that Hassenden must make you an apology ?
I fear he ——

SYLVESTER.

No. On condition that [*He rises*] you give me the likeness
which is in your wardrobe.

LADY URSULA.

You ask before seeing it ! And shouldn't you ask it of Ursula
herself ?

SYLVESTER.

If I like it when I see it, I will ask it of her.

LADY URSULA.

A bargain, a bargain ! But I don't know whether she'll give it
you.

SYLVESTER.

She fainted only for a sight of me !

LADY URSULA.

She might faint less after a sight of you. Seeing is believing —
but dreaming often is ——

SYLVESTER.

Loving ? Aye, and loving dreaming. But I shall like her well,
if she has your merry wit and — shall I say twice your looks ?

LADY URSULA.

Twice my looks ! Well, perhaps some day you shall see the
portrait. So she is forgiven ?

SYLVESTER.

[*Holding out his hand.*] Most heartily.

LADY URSULA.

[*Taking his hand.*] And her brother for her sake ?

SYLVESTER.

Oh, the lesser sinner with the greater. [*They shake hands.*]

L A D Y U R S U L A.

And am I forgiven ?

SYLVESTER.

Why, where's your offence ?

L A D Y U R S U L A.

In wearying you so long.

SYLVESTER.

You are forgiven for your wit — and — well, for that pretty leg of yours. Blushing again ! Pray imitate that sort of coyness which is your sister's.

L A D Y U R S U L A.

I'm nearer to it than you think — and than my appearance proves.

SYLVESTER.

Pray, where is your sister ? We are friends now ?

L A D Y U R S U L A.

With all my heart and all my gratitude.

SYLVESTER.

Then take me to her.

L A D Y U R S U L A.

Take you to her ?

SYLVESTER.

Yes — at Lord Hassenden's. We shall find Blimboe there, and you and he shall witness my apology.

L A D Y U R S U L A.

I — I can't take you to her. She's — she's ——

S Y L V E S T E R.

[*Slapping her on the shoulder.*] Come, come ; she wasn't unwilling to see me before.

L A D Y U R S U L A.

[*Confused.*] No, she's — she's not unwilling to see you, no, in no way, sir. But she's — she's — Oh, she's gone to town with my brother.

S Y L V E S T E R.

To town with —— ?

L A D Y U R S U L A.

Yes — and — and — I — I must follow her at once. Indeed, I've stayed too long already.

S Y L V E S T E R.

For your convenience perhaps, not for my pleasure. As for Lady Ursula ——

[*Enter MILLS, R.*]

M I L L S.

Do you wish the chaise to wait any longer, Sir George ? Are you going to town ?

S Y L V E S T E R.

Going to town ? Yes, I'm going to town. But your chaise is here, Mr. Barrington ?

L A D Y U R S U L A.

[*Puzzled.*] Yes.

S Y L V E S T E R.

And you go to town ? [*URSULA hesitates.*] You said as much this instant.

L A D Y U R S U L A.

Oh, yes — I — I'm going to town.

S Y L V E S T E R.

[*Catching her arm.*] By Heaven, we'll go together ! Together we'll seek your brother and end this silly quarrel. Thank God, it's done ! I always hated it. And then — why, then we'll beg to see your sister — she shall not deny it or I'll fall into a most damnable faint ! And we'll obtain leave to do as we will with that likeness of hers in your wardrobe. Come, what say you ? [*URSULA hesitates.*] Oh, we're friends now — you can't refuse ! [*To MILLS.*] Put my chaise back, Mills — I ride with Mr. Barrington. [*URSULA sinks into her chair.*] Why, are you fainting now ? [*Laughs.*] There's no need ; you're in the house already.

L A D Y U R S U L A.

Thank you — I — I'm very well. For a moment I felt ——

S Y L V E S T E R.

Faint, eh ? Gad, Mr. Barrington, it's in the family ! Are you well enough to drive with me ? If not, pray rest here to-night. Indeed I shall be honoured. I'll postpone my journey and keep you company.

L A D Y U R S U L A.

No, no — I ——

S Y L V E S T E R.

Pray let me bid them prepare a room ——

L A D Y U R S U L A.

No, no, not for the world ! Indeed, sir ——

S Y L V E S T E R.

Call me Sylvester.

L A D Y U R S U L A.

Indeed — Sylvester — with all my thanks to you — I would rather go with you to town than —— than stay here with you.

SYLVESTER.

You don't love my house so much as your sister does? Well, I forgive you — no doubt you have business. [*Pours out wine.*] Drink a glass of wine while you wait, for I must beg a quarter-of-an-hour in which to change my dress. [*To MILLS.*] Mr. Barrington's chaise in twenty minutes.

MILLS.

Yes, Sir George. [*Goes off, R.*]

SYLVESTER.

[*To URSULA who sits by table in bewilderment.*] I'll lose no time. [*Going to her.*] On my soul, Barrington, I'm rejoiced that the affair ends so happily. [*Going R.*] I wouldn't have killed your brother for — [*Pauses and laughs.*] — why, even for the sake of the likeness in the wardrobe. I'll be with you directly. [*Goes off, R. A Pause. URSULA sits still a moment.*]

LADY URSULA.

[*Springing up.*] Ends happily! Heaven help me, it ends neither happily nor at all! I must go to London with him, must I? — Seek my brother with him, find my brother with him? — Seek my sister with him, find my sister with him? Or if I make my escape and go home, why, he'll get first to Frank, and tell Frank — Oh, and tell Frank that Walter has a pretty leg! What shall I do? Another time every man in the world shall kill every other before on their account I put on what I wear now! [*Takes up cloak and wraps it round her.*] Yet I wouldn't have Frank hurt — [*Smiles.*] No, nor Sir George — nor Sir George. What was that he said? A handsome face — a good shape — Oh, he'll be back! I won't wait for him. I'll go now — to London, to Frank. I must tell Frank myself. Sir George's chaise is put back — I shall have ten minutes start — [*Runs L.*] I must get first

to Frank. Quilton, Quilton ! [*Reaches door, L. At that moment BLIMBOE enters ; they almost come into collision.*]

B L I M B O E.

Sir — I — I beg your pardon.

L A D Y U R S U L A.

[*Hastily.*] Oh, I'm to blame. [*Wraps cloak half way over her face.*] Your servant, sir, your servant. [*Bows and goes off hastily.*]

B L I M B O E.

[*Coming down.*] Who's that, I wonder ! Sir George has had a visitor — one not over-eager to stay long, it seems ! And where is Sir George ? [*Enter MILLS, R., carrying SYLVESTER's cloak and hat.*] Who was that gentleman, Mills ?

M I L L S.

The gentleman, sir ? [*Looks round.*] Why, where in the devil's name is he ?

B L I M B O E.

If you leave the devil alone, perhaps he'll leave you alone, Mills. The gentleman ran out as I came in — he was in haste, as it appeared.

M I L L S.

Ran out ?

B L I M B O E.

At his top-speed. [*MILLS runs up L.*] Who was he ? Why, where are you running to ?

M I L L S.

[*Pausing.*] He was to go to London with Sir George.

B L I M B O E.

If he goes as fast all the way, Sir George mustn't linger. Mills, Mills ! [*MILLS shakes his head, points with his finger, and runs*

56 *The* A D V E N T U R E *of*

off, L. Enter SYLVESTER, R., in the black suit. He looks round with surprise.]

S Y L V E S T E R.

You back, Blimboe? You're early. But where's Mr. Barrington?

B L I M B O E.

Mr. Barrington?

S Y L V E S T E R.

Yes, yes — Walter Barrington. He was to carry me to London in his chaise.

B L I M B O E.

Walter Barrington? Why, he's —

S Y L V E S T E R.

[*Impatiently.*] Yes, man, Walter Barrington — Hassenden's brother and — and Lady Ursula's. The quarrel's made up — I'll tell you about that another time — it's a pretty story. But where is the boy? Oh, no doubt Mills has taken him to a dressing-room, to put a touch to his hair or to wash his —

B L I M B O E.

No, Sir George, no. Mills hasn't — [*Enter MILLS, L., still carrying cloak and bat.*]

S Y L V E S T E R.

Well, Mills, where's Mr. Barrington? Is he ready?

M I L L S.

[*Putting down cloak and bat.*] He's gone, Sir George.

S Y L V E S T E R.

Gone? Gone? Where to? How, when, why?

M I L L S.

To town, as I judge, Sir George, by the turn they took; in his

chaise, Sir George — at a gallop, Sir George — but why, God knows, Sir George.

S Y L V E S T E R.

Did he leave no explanation ?

M I L L S.

No, Sir George.

S Y L V E S T E R.

No message ?

M I L L S.

No, Sir George.

S Y L V E S T E R.

No apology ?

M I L L S.

No, Sir George. [SYLVESTER *sinks into a chair, R.*] Can I do anything, Sir George ?

S Y L V E S T E R.

Yes — go — [MILLS *goes, L.*] Go to the devil after Mr. Barrington.

M I L L S.

[*Alarmed.*] Yes, Sir George. [*Goes off, L.*]

B L I M B O E.

My dear friend, what's the meaning of this ? Who is this Mr. Walter —

S Y L V E S T E R.

[*Jumping up.*] Why, he's the impudent brother of an impudent sister — and I'll be revenged on both of them. [BLIMBOE *sits.* SYLVESTER *walks about the stage.*] You should have heard him ! So pretty in his pleading, so anxious for a reconciliation, so friendly, so cordial in his sentiments ! We were to go to town together — to seek Hassenden together — to meet Lady Ursula — Oh, a plague on all the family ! — together — And — now

he leaves me in the lurch — without a word, without excuse. I've done with his brother, but I'll be revenged on him. By my soul, I won't be made a fool of by all the family in turn.

BLIMBOE.

Stop, stop ! [*Rises.*] My dear Sir George, by talking so fast you exhaust yourself without informing me. You say this gentleman was Mr. Walter Barrington ?

SYLVESTER.

[*Impatiently.*] Yes, yes. [*Flings himself into chair R. of table.*]

BLIMBOE.

But Mr. Walter Barrington is still abroad.

SYLVESTER.

No, no ; he arrived home to-day — and came over from Lord Hassenden's to see me.

BLIMBOE.

Hum. [*Sits L. of table.*] That's not what is thought at Lord Hassenden's. They believe him to be still in France. Mrs. Fenton told me so herself.

SYLVESTER.

What ? Still in France ? Does Lady Ursula — But I forgot ; you haven't seen Lady Ursula.

BLIMBOE.

No, she was —

SYLVESTER.

I know — she was gone to London with Lord Hassenden.

BLIMBOE.

To London ? No, no, my dear friend ; you're mistaken, in-

deed you are. Lady Ursula hasn't gone to London with her brother, but to bed with a headache.

SYLVESTER.

What? What's that you say?

BLIMBOE.

I say only what Miss Fenton and her aunt both told me, as an excuse for the lady's absence.

SYLVESTER.

Well, I've been made a fool again, and by a boy without a hair on his chin. Ah, if you want a duel, you shall have it now, friend Blimboe — aye, though he is Lady Ursula's brother!

BLIMBOE.

Though he's ——

SYLVESTER.

Yes, yes. I have no more anger against her. He's my game now.

BLIMBOE.

But he's in France.

SYLVESTER.

Nonsense, man. Do the ladies always know where the men of the house are?

BLIMBOE.

It seems that here they don't know even where the ladies of the house are. For certainly Lady Ursula cannot be both in bed with a headache and gone to London with her brother. [*A pause.*]

SYLVESTER.

It's mysterious. Pray, Blimboe, what do you think?

BLIMBOE.

Oh, I know nothing of the ways of women.

S Y L V E S T E R.

Hum. I thought I knew everything. [*Rises.*] Oh, but it can't be ! It's absurd !

B L I M B O E.

[*Jumping up.*] What's absurd ?

S Y L V E S T E R.

By Gad, he blushed ; he blushed when ——

B L I M B O E.

When what ? [*Enter MILLS, L. He comes down, holding small lace handkerchief in his hand, and comes C. Turns to BLIMBOE.*]

M I L L S.

Mr. Blimboe, sir, is this your handkerchief ? [*Holds it up.*]

B L I M B O E.

My handkerchief ? That ? No. [*Takes from pocket a very large bandanna and holds it up.*] This is my handkerchief.

M I L L S.

[*To SYLVESTER.*] Is it yours, Sir George ?

S Y L V E S T E R.

No. [*Takes out a large but fine handkerchief and holds it up.*] Here is my handkerchief.

M I L L S.

And certainly it is not mine, Sir George.

B L I M B O E.

[*Examining it.*] It looks like — like what I conceive might be a — lady's handkerchief.

S Y L V E S T E R.

Let's see. [*Snatches and examines it.*] Yes, a lady's ! Per-

haps one of the trifles in his wardrobe which that puppy sometimes wears.

B L I M B O E.

[*Pointing.*] Ah, isn't that a mark on the corner?

S Y L V E S T E R.

What? Where? Yes, it's a mark. The Barrington crest.

B L I M B O E.

And no name?

S Y L V E S T E R.

[*Looking again, then crushing handkerchief in his hand and hesitating.*] No — no — no name. Good-night, Blimboe, good-night. Mills, my chaise at once! [*MILLS goes off, L.* S Y L V E S T E R goes up *L.*, puts on hat and takes cloak.]

B L I M B O E.

You'll tell me ——

S Y L V E S T E R.

[*Coming down.*] What? [*Looks again covertly at handkerchief.*]

B L I M B O E.

If you find out anything.

S Y L V E S T E R.

Yes, yes. [*BLIMBOE goes R.*] Good-night — the Barrington crest and ——

B L I M B O E.

Good-night. [*Goes off, R.*]

S Y L V E S T E R.

The Barrington crest — and, by Heaven, Ursula! Does he carry his sister's handkerchief? Mills, the chaise, the chaise! What else is there in that wardrobe? Mills, I say, Mills! [*Enter MILLS, L.*]

M I L L S.

The chaise, Sir George? In an instant, Sir George. Shall I take charge of the handkerchief?

S Y L V E S T E R.

O, no. I'll keep the handkerchief. The chaise, deuce take you, sir, the chaise! [MILLS goes off, L. SYLVESTER goes L. — stops — turns, holds up handkerchief and laughs.] Another duel, then! And this time — I choose the weapons, Lady Ursula!

C U R T A I N







ACT III

Ten p. m. LORD HASSENDEN's lodgings in London, near St. James' Palace. A door up R. L. C. a table set with dessert and decanters. HASSENDEN sits at head, on his R. DENT, L. CASTLETON. CLIFFORD, DEVEREUX and WARD round the table. They are drinking. HASSENDEN is in full uniform. DENT in private dress. The rest in undress or mess uniform. As curtain rises, HASSENDEN gets up.

H A S S E N D E N.



RAY, gentlemen, don't disturb yourselves. The evening is young, and although duty calls me away, I should grieve to spoil your entertainment. [DENT half rises.] No, I insist. [Presses him back into his seat.]

D E N T.

But how long is your guard?

H A S S E N D E N.

Till twelve o'clock.

W A R D.

By gad, we'll wait for you. Won't we, Castleton?

CASTLETON.

With all my heart — if his cellar holds out against our attack.

CLIFFORD.

We'll make a breach in its walls !

HASSENDEN.

No, no, you mustn't wait — I shan't be returning. I have ordered my horse to be ready for me at the door of the guard-room, and I shall ride direct to Edgware.

DEVEREUX.

To Edgware ?

CLIFFORD.

To-night ?

HASSENDEN.

Without disrespect to you, friends, I have reasons for wishing to return home at once.

DEVEREUX.

The usual reason, Hassenden ?

DENT.

We can guess it, eh ? A lady ? [*They laugh.*]

HASSENDEN.

Yes, a lady — the lady whom I hope soon to present to you as Lady Hassenden.

CLIFFORD.

Oh, your pardon, your pardon !

HASSENDEN.

She is our guest now.

DENT.

You're well excused, then, and we mustn't press you to rejoin us.

HASSENDEN.

And, as you know, Castleton, I have a special reason for wishing to see her as soon as possible to-morrow. [*Goes down, R., to fetch his bat which lies on a small table.*]

CASTLETON.

I know, Frank, I know. [*Rises and follows him down, leaving the rest drinking and talking.*] Come now, Frank, entrust this matter to me. I'm your friend and his. He comes to my lodgings to-morrow morning — perhaps even to-night. Let me say something to him in your name. Believe me, he will be eager for a reconciliation ; his reputation makes it easy for him to meet you half way.

HASSENDEN.

Yes, but impossible for me to travel my half of the road. I'm obliged to you, Jack, sincerely obliged — but I must pay my debts — and my sister's. Nothing can be done — the affair must go on. [*Looks at watch — then hastily.*] My hour's past. Good-night, Jack. [*Shakes his hand. Goes up, R.*] Good-night, friends, good-night !

ALL at the table.

Good-night, good-night. [*HASSENDEN goes off, R. CASTLETON goes to table, sits, and takes wine.*]

DENT.

Our host seems anxious — at least not in his usual spirits.

CASTLETON.

He has a troublesome affair on hand.

DEVEREUX.

An affair ? Of this sort ? [*Imitating fencing.*]

CASTLETON.

I'll tell you nothing ; I still hope that it may be arranged.

W A R D.

At least, Jack, let's have no Joicey and McArthur over here. It's well enough for the Irish, but, in faith, in a Christian country — it's nothing but sheer murder.

D E N T.

Murder! No, no, Ward. It's a pretty taking of an even chance — a very gentlemanly throw with fortune. And it has a very fine excitement in it.

D E V E R E U X.

It kills one man for certain — that's praise enough in Dent's eyes.

D E N T.

If you fight across the table, and load both pistols, why I grant you it's murder, and that in an indiscriminate fashion. But with one pistol empty, come, you'll allow that it's a nice test of a gentleman's coolness and so should be countenanced?

C L I F F O R D.

So long as my countenance is not pressed into the service, have it as you will.

C A S T L E T O N.

Ah, Dent, you'd shoot your own brother with pleasure if only the affair was conducted in proper form.

D E N T.

[*Earnestly.*] On my life I wouldn't — not without full cause.

C L I F F O R D.

As — for example?

D E N T.

Well, that he spoke ill of a lady I affected.

W A R D.

Or that he affected a lady you spoke ill of?

D E V E R E U X.

Or that a lady you affected, affected him ?

D E N T.

Oh, faith, there are reasons enough, if you start on them.

C A S T L E T O N.

What ? For a man to shoot his brother ?

D E N T.

Even his brother. A gentleman should not, in his relations towards another gentleman, presume on the accident of kinship. I don't hold His Majesty's Commission, as you do, gentlemen. But I'll defend my honour, even against my brother.

C A S T L E T O N.

Have you a brother ?

D E N T.

No.

C A S T L E T O N.

Thank God ! We're saved a tragedy.

D E V E R E U X.

[*Laughing.*] A brother-in-law, perhaps ?

W A R D.

That was the relationship between Joicey and McArthur.

D E N T.

There, sir, you touch on the one unpleasant aspect of the case.

C L I F F O R D.

Yes, I don't like that. They had been close friends, too.

D E N T.

Sir Robert Clifford misunderstands me. I mean, there is a natural hostility between a man and his wife's family —

A L L.

[*Laughing.*] Oh, oh !

D E N T.

Which imparts to the affair an ugly look of premeditation. On my soul, in the circumstances, I shouldn't have been surprised if the Grand Jury had found a true bill ! But we'll hope for the best, and indeed I'm told, as Sir Robert says, that the gentlemen had been close friends.

C A S T L E T O N.

Ah, aye, we'll hope ; we'll hope McArthur loved Joicey consumedly before he shot him, and wept on his grave afterwards.

[*Enter a* SERVANT.] Well ?

S E R V A N T.

I beg pardon, sir. I thought that my lord was here.

C A S T L E T O N.

No, he's gone on guard. Is he inquired for ?

S E R V A N T.

There's a gentleman asking for him, sir.

C A S T L E T O N.

Why doesn't the gentleman come in ?

C L I F F O R D.

Aye, let him come in.

S E R V A N T.

When I told him that my lord entertained company, he declined to come in, sir.

D E N T.

Hum ! Well, if you didn't tell him who we were —

S E R V A N T.

I did not, sir.

D E N T.

Then there's no offence, I suppose. What's his name?

S E R V A N T.

The gentleman will not give his name, sir.

W A R D.

[*Jumping up.*] Oh, a plague on the fellow's mystery ! Come, shall we have him in ?

D E V E R E U X.

[*Jumping up.*] Aye, let's have him in. We'll have sport with him.

C L I F F O R D.

[*Jumping up.*] I'm with you. Come along. [W A R D, D E V E R E U X and C L I F F O R D run off laughing. S E R V A N T lets them go by and follows them off.]

D E N T.

Yet on consideration there is something churlish in his conduct. Yes, yes ! It is, indeed it is, a reflection on our host. For a slur on his company is a slur on his friends, and a slur on a man's friends is a slur on a man himself — and a slur on a man — on a gentleman —

C A S T L E T O N.

Oh, without doubt Hassenden must run him through the heart ! You've proved it by the book, Dent, and without a flaw. [*A slight scuffle and cries of "Come along, sir, come with us," are heard off R.*] What's going on there ? [*Enter W A R D, D E V E R E U X and C L I F F O R D dragging U R S U L A on. She comes reluctantly, but they bring her to the table and make her sit down at the head.*]

W A R D.

Come, sir, we're wiser for you than you would be for yourself. Here's good company and good wine. Let me pour you a glass. [*They sit.*]

LADY URSULA.

But, gentlemen, I — I — have pressing business with Lord Hassenden.

CLIFFORD.

He's on guard, sir. You can't see him now.

DEVEREUX.

And after that he goes direct to Edgware.

LADY URSULA.

To Edgware? [*Tries to rise.*]

WARD.

No, no, you mustn't break away from us like that. [*Presses her back into her seat.*]

DENT.

[*To URSULA.*] You shall do as you will, presently, sir, but for the moment we must constrain you.

WARD.

You can't be so uncivil as to leave us immediately.

LADY URSULA.

But, gentlemen —

DENT.

No, no! Let me present the company. Here is Mr. Castleton — Mr. Ward — Sir Robert Clifford — Mr. Devereux — all of His Majesty's Guards. I, sir, am called Dent, and am very much at your service for every purpose except to show you the door. [*All rise and bow — URSULA rises and bows nervously. They sit again. A pause.*] Will you honour us with your name, sir?

LADY URSULA.

My — my business being secret, my name had best be secret, too. [*All except CASTLETON and URSULA exchange glances.*]

DENT.

As you will, sir. I may, however, point out to you that you are among men of honour.

CASTLETON.

Oh, drink your wine, Dent, and never mind your honour.

LADY URSULA.

[*To* DENT.] Indeed I don't doubt it, sir.

DENT.

Mr. Castleton, I am not accustomed to forget my honour. [*To* URSULA.] And a secret told to men of honour is more, not less, of a secret than before. Is it not so, gentlemen ?

CLIFFORD *and* DENT.

Yes, yes.

WARD.

Dent's right ; it is certainly so.

CASTLETON.

Nonsense, say I ! A man's name is his own, to give or to withhold. [*To* URSULA.] A glass of wine with you, sir.

LADY URSULA.

I must beg you to excuse me ; I will not drink to-night.

DENT.

The gentleman is not companionable. He joined us only under compulsion, he will not trust us with his name, he will not drink with us.

LADY URSULA.

On my word, gentlemen, I mean no offence — none in the world.

DENT.

Then give me leave to observe, sir, that your behavior might be better matched than it is with your intentions.

C A S T L E T O N.

On my life, this shall go no further ! Come, gentlemen, a toast ! I'll give you one that we should drink under this roof. Pray, Dent, no quarrels to-night !

D E N T.

As you will. The gentleman is young and perhaps errs through ignorance.

L A D Y U R S U L A.

I own, sir, there is room for me to grow wiser.

W A R D.

Your toast, Jack, your toast !

D E V E R E U X.

Yes, the toast !

C A S T L E T O N.

[*Rising.*] Here it is — Our host's sister, the beautiful Ursula Barrington ! We'll drink her now ; if what they say is true, all the town will drink her soon. Come, bumpers !

C L I F F O R D.

Aye, bumpers — and standing, gentlemen ! [*All stand.* W A R D fills U R S U L A's glass. *She looks at him a moment and then stands up.*]

A L L.

[*Except U R S U L A.*] The beautiful Ursula Barrington ! [*They hold up glasses and are prepared to drink.*]

D E N T.

[*To U R S U L A.*] You don't drink, sir ! On my faith now, to refuse a toast ——

L A D Y U R S U L A.

[*Hurriedly lifting glass.*] Indeed, sir — I — I drink very willingly now, sir. [*Raises glass.*] The beautiful Ursula Barrington !



A L L.

Ursula Barrington ! [*They drink and then sit again.*]

D E N T.

Though in plain truth, and saving your presence, Castleton, I'm told that the young lady is nothing out of the common.

L A D Y U R S U L A.

[*Startled.*] Nothing out of the —— [*All turn and look at her. She stops in confusion.*]

D E N T.

You had heard otherwise, sir ?

L A D Y U R S U L A.

I — I — indeed I have some reason to ——

C A S T L E T O N.

So in faith have I. Why, Dent, her hair !

D E N T.

There's none too much of it, and when not powdered it has, I am assured, a plain touch of red !

L A D Y U R S U L A.

[*Low.*] Red !

W A R D.

Oh, oh !

C L I F F O R D.

He'll allow merit to nobody.

C A S T L E T O N.

But her cheek ——

D E N T.

Like the milk maid's in a frost. Too much colour for the taste of the town, believe me.

C A S T L E T O N .

Nay, then, her mouth ——

D E V E R E U X .

Grant him her mouth, Dent, for pity's sake !

D E N T .

Truth is truth —— and her mouth is, I believe, for all the world like a leg of mutton with a slice cut out !

L A D Y U R S U L A .

[*Low.*] Oh !

W A R D .

[*To* C A S T L E T O N .] Another feature, Jack ! You're not bankrupt yet.

C A S T L E T O N .

Then her nose !

D E N T .

I grant you —— I concede her nose. It is very pious —— it points the straight way to heaven.

C A S T L E T O N .

Oh, a plague on his concessions ! Well, then, her eyes ——

D E V E R E U X .

She has nothing else left —— so pray be merciful, Dent.

D E N T .

One I admit is well enough.

W A R D *and* C L I F F O R D .

[*Laughing.*] One !

L A D Y U R S U L A .

[*Low.*] One !

D E N T .

But the other admires its fellow so intemperately that it is forever

trying to see it across her nose. [*Turning to* URSULA.] In plain English, she squints, sir, like a Turk.

L A D Y U R S U L A.

[*Jumping up.*] Oh, I'll not endure it ! It's a calumny !

D E N T.

You are acquainted with the lady we speak of, sir ?

L A D Y U R S U L A.

[*Confused.*] No, no — I — I'm not acquainted with her. No — I never saw her in my life.

D E N T.

Then let me observe, sir, that you do ill to accuse me of calumny when you know nothing to the contrary of what I say.

W A R D.

[*Low, to* CLIFFORD.] He'll have his quarrel yet.

C L I F F O R D.

Oh, he won't be baulked of that.

D E N T.

[*To* URSULA.] You mark my words, sir ?

L A D Y U R S U L A.

I care not. I know it is a calumny.

C A S T L E T O N.

Why, so do I — the merest calumny. It's told by some jealous woman or some disappointed suitor.

D E N T.

[*Rising.*] You, Castleton, are allowed a liberty which this gentleman, a stranger, can hardly claim. [*To* URSULA.] Sir, do you repeat that what I say is calumny ?

L A D Y U R S U L A .

[*Indignantly.*] Yes, I do. Of the rest I say nothing ; but she does not squint.

D E N T .

[*Shrugging his shoulders.*] I say she does ; and since I say she does — and you say she doesn't — why, sir, you say that I lie. [URSULA *starts back. All jump up.*]

C A S T L E T O N .

No, no ! In heaven's name, Dent ——

D E N T .

[*Going down, R.*] I won't be interfered with. [*To URSULA, who has come to C.*] Do you say I lie, sir ?

L A D Y U R S U L A .

I — I say — she doesn't squint.

D E N T .

[*To WARD, CLIFFORD and DEVEREUX, who have come down, L., and stand together.*] Gentlemen, I appeal to you !

C L I F F O R D .

That is — he says you lie ; for calumny, I take it, is but Latin for lie.

L A D Y U R S U L A .

I protest — I protest —— Indeed, you twist my words.

D E V E R E U X .

What other meaning is there in the words ?

W A R D .

And he has repeated them three times. [*Taking a step to URSULA.*] You know, sir, what is usual among gentlemen ?

L A D Y U R S U L A .

I — I don't understand ——

C A S T L E T O N.

In heaven's name, are we to quarrel over such a trifle ?

D E N T.

The matter has gone too far for your intervention, Mr. Castleton. [*He crosses to L. and whispers an instant to WARD. CASTLETON catches URSULA by the arm and draws her to R., speaking in her ear. She is bewildered. DENT turns.*] I understand the gentleman persists ? Then —— [*Skrugs his shoulders. All stand looking at URSULA. A pause.*]

C A S T L E T O N.

I'll have no part in this. The gentleman has given no sufficient offence.

D E N T.

Say you so ? That plea shall not serve. If there is not offence enough, why, here is more. [*He draws a glove from his pocket and advances towards URSULA, intending to strike her in the face with it. She stands still.*] Do you understand this, sir ? [*He raises his hand. As he does so, a servant enters. They hear him. All look round, except URSULA, who stands rigid. DENT arrests his blow.*]

S E R V A N T.

Sir George Sylvester. [*Enter SYLVESTER. SERVANT lets him pass and then goes off, after a curious look round on the scene.*]

L A D Y U R S U L A.

[*Low.*] Sir George Sylvester !

C A S T L E T O N.

What ? George ! You here — at Hassenden's !

S Y L V E S T E R.

Yes. I am here — at Lord Hassenden's. If you require an explanation, I will give it later. For the present — I am here

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seeking a certain gentleman —— [*Sees* URSULA *and comes down, C., facing her ; DENT draws back a little, L.*] Ah, there I see him ! [*Takes off his hat, bows to URSULA, and flings hat on the table.*] Your servant, sir. [*URSULA does not move.*] I must trouble you with a word on a matter which you can have no difficulty in guessing, Mr. Barrington.

A L L.

Mr. Barrington ! Barrington !

S Y L V E S T E R.

[*Smiling.*] Hasn't Mr. Barrington announced himself ? I have pleasure in performing that office for him. Gentlemen, Mr. Walter Barrington, Lord Hassenden's brother.

D E N T.

Now, by heaven, I may put my glove back in my pocket — there's no need of further offence now. Look you, gentlemen. By the concealment, the wilful concealment, of his name, he has betrayed me — me, a man of breeding — into speaking disparagingly of a lady in the presence of her brother ! [*Coming C., to SYLVESTER.*] Pray give me leave, Sir George !

S Y L V E S T E R.

[*Not moving.*] Give you leave, Mr. Dent ? I'm so unfortunate as not to understand you.

D E N T.

Oh, it's plain enough — and but for your coming the matter would have been well advanced by now. [*Indicating URSULA.*] I have a quarrel with this gentleman.

S Y L V E S T E R.

Gad, that's strange. So have I !

L A D Y U R S U L A.

What ? Must I fight both of you ?

DENT.

[*To SYLVESTER.*] When I tell you of my cause for offence which arose just now ——

SYLVESTER.

Pardon me. I have no leisure to hear it. Whatever it be, I claim precedence. My quarrel arose earlier in the evening — at my own house at Edgware.

L A D Y U R S U L A.

At Edgware ! A quarrel at Edgware ?

DENT.

I am very reluctant to yield to you, Sir George. And I thought you had sworn to go out no more.

SYLVESTER.

There are things which a man cannot endure. Let me tell you.

DENT.

In truth, I don't like this. Coming after you, I'm likely to find an opponent not worth a thrust. I'm convinced, sir, that my quarrel makes up in gravity what it lacks in seniority.

SYLVESTER.

No, no ; I insist on my seniority.

C A S T L E T O N.

But, George, your quarrel is not with Mr. Barrington here, but with ——

SYLVESTER.

By your leave, Jack, I say it is with Mr. Barrington. You shall hear.

L A D Y U R S U L A.

Pray let me hear — for I vow I know of no quarrel.

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WARD, CLIFFORD *and* DEVEREUX.

Yes, let's hear.

DENT.

What the plague, Castleton, is it your business to spoil every quarrel?

WARD.

Now let's hear Sylvester.

SYLVESTER.

Mr. Barrington shall correct me if I err in any particular. At my house at Edgware to-day this gentleman presented himself. He came on important business. Is it not so, sir?

LADY URSULA.

Yes, it is so.

SYLVESTER.

Our conversation was long, and it was friendly. Is it not so, sir?

LADY URSULA.

Yes.

CASTLETON.

Friendly? Why, then, George —

SYLVESTER.

[*Smiling.*] No, no, Jack. Pray keep him quiet, gentlemen. [CASTLETON crosses to WARD, *who whispers to him.* CASTLETON makes a sign of discontent.] At the end of our conference, it appeared that Mr. Barrington was proceeding to London. I was to go next day — to Jack Castleton's here. But for the pleasure of his company I changed my plans. Mark me, for his sake I changed my plans.

DENT.

I mark that, Sir George. Faith, it may be a fact of great moment.

SYLVESTER.

His chaise was at the door. I proposed to ride with him. Gen-

lemen, he accepted my proposal with cordiality — with great cordiality. Is it not so, sir ?

L A D Y U R S U L A.

I — I can deny none of it.

S Y L V E S T E R.

Thus we were to go. Then I begged a few minutes in which to change my dress and make myself fit for his distinguished company. He agreed readily. I went, leaving him in my dining-room. [*A pause.*] Gentlemen, I am at your disposal. Pray listen. When I returned, Mr. Barrington was gone !

A L L.

[*Except* URSULA.] Gone !

S Y L V E S T E R.

Gone — run off — without a word — an explanation — an apology — an excuse. I was left in the lurch, a misguided fool — while he went up to town, laughing at me !

W A R D.

Monstrous !

L A D Y U R S U L A.

I — I did not laugh.

D E N T.

The denial is limited — very strictly limited. He went — but he did not laugh.

D E V E R E U X.

A great palliation, truly !

C L I F F O R D.

Palliation ! Nay, it seems to me that it aggravates his offence.

D E N T.

True, true. It shows that the act was no mere whim, but a deliberate premeditated insult.

S Y L V E S T E R.

What say you, gentlemen ? Have I a good cause of quarrel ?

D E V E R E U X.

A rank affront !

W A R D.

I never heard worse.

C L I F F O R D.

You can't sit down under it, Sir George.

D E N T.

Faith, it's a better quarrel than my own. I'll not give up my rights, but I'll yield you precedence, hang me if I won't.

C A S T L E T O N.

But, Mr. Barrington, surely you have some explanation, some excuse to offer to Sir George ?

L A D Y U R S U L A.

None. None that I can give.

S Y L V E S T E R.

[*Advancing a step towards her and smiling.*] Have you none, sir ? No plea to disarm my resentment ?

L A D Y U R S U L A.

No, I have none.

D E N T.

He's utterly intractable.

S Y L V E S T E R.

You're sure, sir ? No explanation, no excuse ?

L A D Y U R S U L A.

Neither, sir.

D E N T.

Then the course is plain. We waste time in talking.

SYLVESTER.

Still one moment, please ! I want to ask Mr. Barrington — this gentleman here — one question — before you all.

DENT.

Sir George, at the stage we have reached, is it regular ——

SYLVESTER.

Forgive me. The position is — peculiar. [*To* URSULA.] If you and I were alone, sir, would you give any excuse which you will not give before others ?

LADY URSULA.

There is no excuse that I would or could give to you, Sir George.

DENT.

Then the affair goes on !

CLIFFORD *and* DEVEREUX.

Undoubtedly.

WARD.

To-morrow morning, I suppose ?

LADY URSULA.

No. [*They turn to her.*] If I must fight, I will fight. But I can't fight to-morrow.

DENT.

Oh, take your time. The next day, then ?

LADY URSULA.

No. If I fight at all, I fight here and now. [*A movement of the rest.*]

CASTLETON.

What ? Here ? Now ?

DENT.

Irregular ! Most irregular !

LADY URSULA.

I am challenged. Haven't I choice of time and place ?

CASTLETON.

Oh, if you insist. And neither of you are in the Service.

WARD.

We shouldn't venture to fight in such a fashion.

DENT.

Clear the room, then. Have that table back. [DEVEREUX, CLIFFORD and WARD go to table and take hold of it preparatory to moving it.] Shall I act for you, Sir George ? And perhaps Castleton —

LADY URSULA.

Pray don't move the table in that way, gentlemen. [*The three look round at her.*] Into the middle of the room, please. [*Goes C.*] Here, if you please.

CASTLETON.

The middle of the room ? It will be in your way, Mr. Barrington.

LADY URSULA.

No. It will be between us.

DENT.

Between you ? The deuce ! You fight with swords, I take it, sir ?

LADY URSULA.

I beg that Mr. Castleton, if he acts for me, will stipulate that we fight with pistols.

SYLVESTER.

[*Startled.*] Pistols !

DENT.

Well — Mr. Barrington is the challenged party.

W A R D.

I don't like pistols in the dining-room.

D E N T.

Nor I. But — Hassenden has duelling pistols, I know. Castle-
ton, I shall need your help.

C A S T L E T O N.

In what ?

D E N T.

In loading the pistols.

L A D Y U R S U L A.

In loading one of them. [*SYLVESTER starts. All look at her.*]
In loading one of them. You force me to fight Sir George Syl-
vester. I will fight in my own way. Set the table between us
and load one pistol. We will fight as Colonel Joicey and Mr.
McArthur fought.

S Y L V E S T E R.

What ?

L A D Y U R S U L A.

The table between us, and one pistol loaded, sir.

S Y L V E S T E R.

Good God ! [*He looks intently at her. She smiles. The rest
whisper together. A pause.*]

L A D Y U R S U L A.

Thus, sir, our skill will be equal — and our chances. Do you
quarrel with that ?

D E N T.

Faith, sir, I don't. And now you shall see, gentlemen, that I
was right, and that such an affair makes a pretty spectacle.

C A S T L E T O N.

It's murder, damned murder.

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L A D Y U R S U L A.

Let those who urged on the quarrel reckon with that.

S Y L V E S T E R.

[*To DENT.*] ~~By God~~ — I meant only to disarm him — if he fought at all.

D E N T.

Aye, but you're in for something more now. Gad, I'm no coward, but I begin to regret less my courtesy in yielding you precedence.

L A D Y U R S U L A.

Pray bring the pistols. My time is short.

D E N T.

In this world, sir ?

L A D Y U R S U L A.

In the same world with Sir George.

D E N T.

On my honour, well answered ! Given a bit of luck to-night, you'll live to become a wit !

C A S T L E T O N.

You can't mean this, Mr. Barrington !

W A R D.

In truth, I myself——

L A D Y U R S U L A.

I mean it absolutely.

D E N T.

The pistols, then ! Clifford, I believe you'll find them on the shelf there by the mantelpiece. [*CLIFFORD crosses, R., to mantelpiece, finds box containing pistols and brings it to DENT. He opens it and takes pistols, giving box to CLIFFORD, who puts it on table*

and stands L. again.] We turn our backs and load one of them, Castleton.

C A S T L E T O N.

Lord forgive us ! [*He crosses to DENT, L. They turn and stand together over the pistol.*]

S Y L V E S T E R.

[*Raising his hand.*] Stop ! [*All turn towards him.*] I will not fight on these terms or in this manner. I have, I believe, proved my courage. But I have no mind either to murder this gentleman or to be murdered by him. [*A pause.*]

D E N T.

Hum ! Your courage, Sir George, is doubtless beyond the need of vindication. But you have challenged Mr. Barrington, and he has chosen ——

S Y L V E S T E R.

A barbarous mode of encounter.

D E N T.

Ah, one in which your courage has not yet been proved. [*He smiles and looks at WARD, DEVEREUX and CLIFFORD, who laugh.*]

S Y L V E S T E R.

With any gentleman here, except my friend Jack Castleton and Mr. Barrington, I am ready to prove it in that mode also. [*WARD, DEVEREUX and CLIFFORD grow grave.*] Shall I begin with you, Mr. Dent ?

D E N T.

[*Smiling.*] My dear Sir George, have we a quarrel ? No, no ! And I agree that you might hesitate if Jack Castleton, your old friend, were in question. But Mr. Barrington has, as you yourself insist, grossly affronted you. Come, gentlemen, doesn't Sir George owe us a reason for this refusal ?

W A R D.

I think he does.

C L I F F O R D.

To offer a challenge and decline the acceptance —

D E V E R E U X.

Oh, I say nothing. But Mr. McArthur held himself bound to accept, and the clubs in Dublin approved his conduct.

D E N T.

They offered him a banquet, sir, after the event — but he declined, through a sensibility possibly excessive.

L A D Y U R S U L A.

Pray, gentlemen, when your discussion is ended — the pistols !

S Y L V E S T E R.

I will not fight thus.

W A R D.

We await your reasons, Sir George Sylvester.

S Y L V E S T E R.

Mr. Barrington had incensed me by his uncivil conduct, I would have given him a lesson in manners. But I will not fight him as Joicey and McArthur fought.

D E N T.

The reason, sir !

S Y L V E S T E R.

Will you have the reason ?

D E N T.

We wait for it.

W A R D.

Yes ; we are waiting for it.

S Y L V E S T E R.

Here it is, then. [*He looks hard at* U R S U L A .] In aiming at



Mr. Barrington, I should aim at his sister, Lady Ursula. [*URSULA starts. All show surprise.*] To whom his life is as dear as her own.

C A S T L E T O N .

Lady Ursula ?

S Y L V E S T E R .

And I — gentlemen, we are private here — I have too deep an interest in that lady to suffer me to injure her.

C A S T L E T O N .

But, George, you never saw her !

S Y L V E S T E R .

[*Looking at URSULA — slowly and smiling a little.*] I am not sure. Be that as it may — for Lady Ursula's sake I will not meet that gentleman in the mode that he proposes.

D E N T .

A strange attitude, Sir George, if I may make free to observe so much.

S Y L V E S T E R .

If my attitude offends you, Mr. Dent, or anyone here, I am ready to answer the offence. And I'll not complain if you or he choose Joicey and McArthur's way. There is the table !

W A R D .

[*Laughing.*] On my life, I'm not for you in that fashion.

C L I F F O R D .

Nor I.

D E V E R E U X .

[*Laughing.*] I'll keep myself for my wife's family.

W A R D .

Come, let's be friends. Sir George's courage needs no proof ; Mr. Barrington has given full evidence of his. And, seeing Sir

George's mood, I think Mr. Dent must allow that he has been misinformed concerning Lady Ursula.

DENT.

Indeed, if Sir George has ceased to hate women for her sake —

C A S T L E T O N.

Why, it would seem as though her eyes looked straight, after all.

S Y L V E S T E R.

For my part I will accept Mr. Barrington's apology, if he will assure me that he had good cause for his behaviour — although it be such that he can't give it here.

C A S T L E T O N.

Come, Mr. Barrington, don't be behind Sir George in complaisance.

L A D Y U R S U L A.

In good truth, gentlemen, I had the best of reasons — but one I cannot give to you.

C L I F F O R D.

By heaven, a lady in the case !

D E V E R E U X.

Ha-ha !

D E N T.

For a thousand pounds, now !

W A R D.

Confess yourself, Mr. Barrington !

L A D Y U R S U L A.

[*Smiling.*] I must own it — a lady in the case.

C A S T L E T O N.

I thought as much.

S Y L V E S T E R.

I'd have sworn it ! And one that looks straight, sir ?

L A D Y U R S U L A.

Why, yes — at least, when a man she likes is in front of her.

C A S T L E T O N.

And whose mouth is —

L A D Y U R S U L A.

Well enough to speak and eat with. Beyond that I cannot tell.

D E V E R E U X *and* C L I F F O R D.

Oh, oh !

D E N T.

And her cheeks, sir ?

L A D Y U R S U L A.

Not over-red — if only they're let alone.

W A R D.

Bumpers again ! [*He goes to table.*] Bumpers ! And in all friendship !

A L L.

[*Following towards table.*] Agreed, agreed ! [*They stand round table and fill glasses.*]

C A S T L E T O N.

A double toast now ! We'll drink to the ladies — Sir George's and Mr. Barrington's !

W A R D.

And if ~~God~~ makes Sir George and Mr. Barrington brothers-in-law — why, He has sent them warning by the fate of Joicey and McArthur !

D E V E R E U X.

The toast ! And then to bed !

S Y L V E S T E R.

I'll give it, then. [*Holds up glass.*] Here's to the beautiful Lady Ursula ! [*Pauses.*]

DENT.

Go on, sir, go on. There'll be a new quarrel if you forget the other lady.

SYLVESTER.

[*Looking at and bowing to* URSULA.] And the lady whom in all the world Mr. Barrington loves best. [*They all raise glasses.*]

CASTLETON.

[*To* URSULA.] Drink, sir, drink.

LADY URSULA.

I drink to both of them. [*All drink.*]

CASTLETON.

And when they meet, may they love one another! [*They set down glasses.*]

SYLVESTER.

I think they will.

LADY URSULA.

I trust so, indeed.

CASTLETON.

And now — to bed. [*All except* URSULA *and* SYLVESTER *prepare to go.*]

SYLVESTER.

[*Coming down, R.*] If Mr. Barrington will allow me, I have one word for his private ear.

LADY URSULA.

[*Starting.*] I am — I — [*Coming down, L.*] I am at your service, sir.

DENT.

[*Turning to* URSULA.] Good-night, sir. Yet, I beg you, practice in future a more polite mode of fighting.

LADY URSULA.

My fighting, sir, shall grow more polite if your speech will.

W A R D.

He has you, Dent ! Let him alone !

C L I F F O R D.

Aye, and you thought the mode pretty, you remember !

D E N T.

Faith, so I did — till Sir George proposed to try it with me.
[*All laugh. WARD takes CLIFFORD's arm and goes off with him, followed by DEVEREUX, laughing and talking.*] Good-night. [*Goes towards door, but pauses. CASTLETON goes to him and takes his arm.*]

C A S T L E T O N.

To bed, to bed.

D E N T.

[*To URSULA.*] Practice the sword, sir — the sword. Your figure is made for the art.

L A D Y U R S U L A.

I pray heaven it be made for other purposes.

C A S T L E T O N.

Come, Dent, will you be gone ?

D E N T.

For a barbarous mode of resentment unduly confines freedom of opinion. Pray think on this. Good-night. [*He bows and goes off.*]

C A S T L E T O N.

Mr. Barrington, your servant. [*They bow.*] George, you'll follow me presently ?

S Y L V E S T E R.

As soon as I have said what I want to say to Mr. Barrington.

C A S T L E T O N.

Good ! Till then ! [*Waves his hand and goes off.* URSULA and SYLVESTER face one another. A pause. Then URSULA reels a

little. SYLVESTER springs forward to help her, but she stops him, makes her way to a chair and stands resting her arm on its back.

LADY URSULA.

You — you have something to say to me ?

SYLVESTER.

But a word or two. From your not giving your name to these gentlemen, I presume that you wished your movements not to be known ?

LADY URSULA.

It is so. I wouldn't have joined them, but they forced me in.

SYLVESTER.

And from your readiness to fight in that most desperate fashion sooner than risk discovery, I presume that your relations with this lady are a profound secret ?

LADY URSULA.

A secret most profound, Sir George.

SYLVESTER.

Probably when you leave here you'll seek her ?

LADY URSULA.

Her first — and then my brother.

SYLVESTER.

[*With a disappointed air.*] Ah, then, I fear you can't do me the service I had meant to ask of you. I regret it, sir, but I understand your position. As regards your brother, I am of the same mind as before. Pray present my compliments to him. Good-night. [*Turns away.*]

LADY URSULA.

Pray wait, pray wait ! What is the service you desire of me ?

S Y L V E S T E R.

But if you seek this lady immediately, you can't perform it.
Good-night.

L A D Y U R S U L A.

Sir, sir, a moment ——

S Y L V E S T E R.

For the service I would have begged of you is to seek your sister immediately. So —— Again, good-night. [*Goes up.*]

L A D Y U R S U L A.

[*Following him.*] You're very hasty. [SYLVESTER *pauses and turns.*] Perhaps —— perhaps I could contrive to see my sister also.

S Y L V E S T E R.

What ? At the same time as the lady ? No, no, Mr. Barrington !

L A D Y U R S U L A.

I —— I —— mean —— on the way. Why, yes, sir, why not ? On my way to the lady.

S Y L V E S T E R.

[*Coming down a little.*] The lady lives near your sister, then ?

L A D Y U R S U L A.

[*Coming down.*] Yes —— very near —— quite near.

S Y L V E S T E R.

[*Following her down.*] You heard what I said about your sister ?

L A D Y U R S U L A.

About my —— Oh, I assure you I took it as no more than a device to extricate yourself from a difficulty.

S Y L V E S T E R.

[*Smiling.*] As no more than that ?

L A D Y U R S U L A.

As no more, indeed. [*Laughs nervously.* SYLVESTER *laughs, too.*] What more could it be — if — if you haven't seen the lady ?

S Y L V E S T E R.

[*Slowly.*] True — if I haven't seen her. [*A short pause, he smiling, she confused.*] To return — you will carry my message to her ?

L A D Y U R S U L A.

With all my heart. What is it ?

S Y L V E S T E R.

But do you think she will listen to it kindly ?

L A D Y U R S U L A.

If — if I can persuade her, sir, she will.

S Y L V E S T E R.

Tell her, then, that if she will to-morrow again stop before my door, she shall be most truly welcome.

L A D Y U R S U L A.

I will give your message.

S Y L V E S T E R.

[*Advancing a step towards her.*] But what will its reception be ? Is she of a forgiving temper ?

L A D Y U R S U L A.

Towards those who please her.

S Y L V E S T E R.

Do I please her ?

L A D Y U R S U L A.

How — how should you — if you have never seen her ?

S Y L V E S T E R.

Ah, true — if I have never seen her. But should I please her if she saw me ?

L A D Y U R S U L A.

That she shall tell you when she sees you.

S Y L V E S T E R.

Then you think she will come ?

L A D Y U R S U L A.

I — I think she will.

S Y L V E S T E R.

Yet in case she shouldn't, there is one other thing I will beg of you. I have something of hers ——

L A D Y U R S U L A.

[*Starting.*] You have something of hers ?

S Y L V E S T E R.

Which I mustn't keep, because it's not by her will or gift that I have it.

L A D Y U R S U L A.

But I — I can't think what it is.

S Y L V E S T E R.

[*Smiling.*] Why, how should you know what it is ? It was found — in my house.

L A D Y U R S U L A.

In your house ?

S Y L V E S T E R.

Yes — or perhaps in the avenue. She must have dropped it, may be in her — her faintness, sir, or as she hurried away. But it is certainly hers. It has her name on it.

L A D Y U R S U L A.

Her name ?

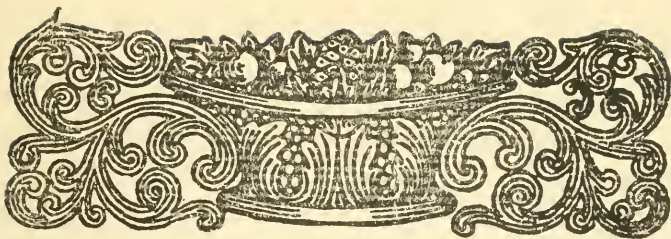
SYLVESTER.

Yes, it is inscribed — Ursula. [*Taking out URSULA's handkerchief.*] Give it her and say, if she will accord me her forgiveness — and her favour — let her bring it herself again. Here it is, sir. [*Gives her the handkerchief. She takes it timidly, looks at him a moment and turns away in confusion. SYLVESTER smiles.*] Let her bring it to me again. Good-night. [*He goes up to door, pauses and turns.*] Tell her, too, that she is in my thoughts. Good-night. [*Stands looking and smiling at her a moment; she does not look at him. Then he goes off. URSULA stands a moment, looking at the handkerchief.*]

LADY URSULA.

Has he guessed? Did he know me? “If I have not seen her,” he said. And — what was it? “I am not sure” — And where was this found? I swear I didn’t drop it the first time! And if I dropped it the time I — the second time! Oh, I can’t tell. I’ll get back to Edgware immediately to Frank — and to the lady. [*Laughs.*] The lady who lives near Lady Ursula — to the lady I love — the lady they toasted with — with the lady whom Sir George Sylvester loves. “Whom he loves.” What was it? “I have too deep an interest in that lady.” Oh, I’m a fool! It was nothing but a ruse, a device — yet he looked — Ah, did he? How did he look, in truth how did he look? “Tell her that she is in my thoughts.” Oh, I am mad with — with — I don’t know what I am mad with, but mad I am. Did he know me? Does he — [*Looks at handkerchief — then half-laughing, half-sobbing.*] Oh! [*Kisses handkerchief twice and then hides her face in it.*]

CURTAIN



ACT IV

About twelve-thirty a. m. SYLVESTER'S house as in Act I. At table, L., BLIMBOE sits writing a sermon. MILLS stands by table with a bunch of large keys in one hand and a candle in the other. He yawns as curtain rises.

BLIMBOE.



READING from sermon.] Therefore, brothers, the world being full of snares and wickedness, it is beyond all else necessary and expedient that you hearken [MILLS yawns, BLIMBOE looks up a moment, then goes on] — that you hearken to

the words of my text and quit yourselves like men —

MILLS.

It grows late, Mr. Blimboe.

BLIMBOE.

[*Reading.*] And, dear sisters, think not that the text has no application to you. You also in your proper manner and — [MILLS yawns. BLIMBOE looks up — then goes on] — sphere of action can, and should, quit yourselves like men. For it is not the raiment that makes the man —

MILLS.

I have locked the door, sir. Shall you be up long yet?

BLIMBOE.

Not long, not long.

MILLS.

It's hard on one o'clock, sir.

BLIMBOE.

Go to bed, go to bed, Mills. Leave me to work. I must complete the revision of my sermon. Where was I? Ah, yes. It is not the raiment —

MILLS.

Good-night, sir. [*Going off.*] The sermon don't seem to send him to sleep — it will me, though, on Sunday. [*Goes off, R.*]

BLIMBOE.

It is not the raiment that makes the true man — [*Lays down paper.*] It is strange that sometimes a man's thoughts will wander and the mind be full of alien images. To-night my mind holds nothing but vanities — aye, or worse — duels — gallant gentlemen to fight them and — yes, alas, fair ladies to cause 'em. Yet — [*shaking his head*] — men should not fight duels nor should ladies cause 'em. Our natures are perverse. Come, to work! [*Takes up paper.*] It is the heart that makes the man, and a weak woman may have a heart as bold — [*Lets paper drop and jumps up.*] So I wager — at least I do not wager — no — I — I opine has this Lady Ursula. I wish I had seen her, but she was in bed. Why, no! She was not in bed! She was — ah, now where was she? At least she was not to be seen. Well, well! [*Is about to sit down, when a loud knocking is heard off L.*] A knock! Who is it at this time? Can Sir George have come back? [*Knock repeated.*] Ah, and Mills has gone to bed. I must open the door

The L A D Y U R S U L A 101

myself. [*Takes candle from table and goes up, L. Pauses.*] It may not be Sir George. I don't know who it may be. [*Crosses R. to fireplace.*] At this hour there may be need of carnal weapons. [*Takes up a poker and, crossing to L., goes off cautiously. A pause. Then the noise of bolts drawn back and a cry of surprise from BLIMBOE. Enter BLIMBOE in amazement, followed by DOROTHY in agitation.*] Miss — Miss Fenton ! In heaven's name, what brings you here ?

D O R O T H Y.

[*Coming down, C.*] Oh, where, where, where is Ursula ?

B L I M B O E.

[*Putting down candle and coming L.*] Lady Ursula ? Where is Lady Ursula ? Why, surely she's in bed ? No, I should say — surely she's gone to London ?

D O R O T H Y.

Alas, sir, she's neither in bed, nor, so far as I know, gone to London. She went out — I promised to sit up and let her in. My aunt thought she was gone to bed with a headache. I waited but she didn't return. So I pretended to go to bed — and I have run here all alone, all the way. Surely, surely she's here, Mr. Blimboe ?

B L I M B O E.

Surely here ? Surely not here ! Can you suppose, madam ——

D O R O T H Y.

Not here ! Oh, what has become of her ?

B L I M B O E.

How could she be here ? It would be ——

D O R O T H Y.

Oh, it would be — be all that it shouldn't be, I know that well. But where is she ? She came here — she came here this evening.

BLIMBOE.

[*Looks at her, goes and puts poker down on table and comes to her.*]
Did she come here ?

DOROTHY.

Yes, yes. It was a secret, of course, but I must tell you now. For I'm at my wits' end and you may be able to help me. If my aunt should discover her absence or — oh, if Lord Hassenden should return and find her absent — [*Going close to him.*] Speak, for heaven's sake, speak, Mr. Blimboe. She may have been murdered.

BLIMBOE.

You say she came here ?

DOROTHY.

Yes — yes — about eight o'clock — dressed — dressed as you are.

BLIMBOE.

[*Looking down at his clothes.*] Dressed as I am !

DOROTHY.

Oh, not exactly as you are, but in — in — Oh, as a man, you know.

BLIMBOE.

As a man !

DOROTHY.

Pretending to be her brother Walter.

BLIMBOE.

Heavens above us ! [*Drops into a chair, L.*]

DOROTHY.

She should have been back long ago, but I've not seen her since.

BLIMBOE.

As a man ! [*He sits a moment, then begins to laugh.*] It was

she, then ! By all that's wonderful, it was she ! Oh, ha, ha !
— and Sir George ——— Oh, ha, ha !

DOROTHY.

[*Indignant.*] You're laughing ! I declare you are. Oh, how can you laugh ?

BLIMBOE.

[*Suddenly grave.*] I laughing ! I laugh ! My dear lady ! No, no. I don't laugh. I — I deplore ! I laugh at a thing so unseemly as for a young lady — a young lady of rank, too — sister to my Lord Hassenden — to come — to come alone — to a gentleman's house in — in — in what I wear — and ———

DOROTHY.

Oh, I know all that, Mr. Blimboe, but ———

BLIMBOE.

Laugh indeed ! I'm aghast, Miss Fenton, quite aghast.

DOROTHY.

For pity's sake, tell me — is she here, or what has become of her ?

BLIMBOE.

[*Smiling again.*] To think of it ! Oh, her air, her jaunty walk, her laced hat, her shoes, the turn of her ———

DOROTHY.

Mr. Blimboe !

BLIMBOE.

[*Starting.*] I — I beg your pardon. Well, Miss Fenton, I can give you information. The gentleman you seek ———

DOROTHY.

The gentleman ?

BLIMBOE.

I should say the lady — yes, the lady, Miss Fenton. The lady

took his leave — her leave, I mean — very hastily, and set out in his — in her chaise for London about nine o'clock.

DOROTHY.

Then she has gone to London ?

BLIMBOE.

Oh, yes, he's gone to London. [DOROTHY looks at him.] She — she's gone to London.

DOROTHY.

But where in London ?

BLIMBOE.

Oh, that I don't know. Sir George was to go with her —

DOROTHY.

Sir George with her ? Worse and worse !

BLIMBOE.

But, as I was about to observe, he did not. She evaded him and escaped alone. He followed soon afterwards in his own chaise. Beyond that I know nothing. [*A pause. DOROTHY stands agbait. BLIMBOE goes to table, takes up paper, looks at it a moment, and then reads in an absent tone.*] It is not the raiment that makes the true man, it is the heart and — [Sits slowly L. of table.]

DOROTHY.

Oh, what are you talking of ? And meanwhile Ursula may be — [Shudders.] Well, I must go home. No, I daren't go home. I must stay here. [Sits R. of table. BLIMBOE drops paper and looks across at her.]

BLIMBOE.

[Slowly.] You must stay here, Miss Fenton ?

DOROTHY.

Yes, till Ursula comes.

BLIMBOE.

But, my dear young lady, I apprehend — and — er — I may add, hope — that Lady Ursula will not come — not to-night, at all events. It's so — so very late.

DOROTHY.

I must wait in case she should. Besides, I daren't face my aunt — nor Frank. No! I'll stay here. [*Points to paper.*] Oh, go on with your work. I won't interrupt you.

BLIMBOE.

But, my dear Miss Fenton —

DOROTHY.

I shall stay. Pray don't discuss it with me. I do you no harm, Mr. Blimboe.

BLIMBOE.

You do me no harm, certainly. But — pray excuse me — if — anybody came?

DOROTHY.

Anybody came? [*Jumping up.*] Why, who should come?

BLIMBOE.

If you were found here?

DOROTHY.

Who should find me here? [*Goes door, R.*]

BLIMBOE.

In all likelihood indeed, nobody — but I am here.

DOROTHY.

[*Turning and looking at him.*] Oh — you?

BLIMBOE.

And — and — [*Rising and going L.*] Now I wonder how such a thing would present itself to the Bishop's mind?

DOROTHY.

My errand is harmless. [*Advancing towards him.*] Mr. Blimboe, let who will come. I am only seeking Ursula. I would face all the world.

BLIMBOE.

Yes, yes, all the world, but — but what about the Bishop?

DOROTHY.

I'm afraid — let all the world — [*A knock is heard off L.*] A knock! Oh, that must be Ursula! Thank heaven! I'll run and let her in. [*Runs L. BLIMBOE intercepts her and brings her down again.*]

BLIMBOE.

It won't be Lady Ursula. She won't come back.

DOROTHY

Not Ursula! Not Ursula! Then who is it? I can't be seen, I can't be —

BLIMBOE.

But you said just now —

DOROTHY.

Just now! Oh, what does it matter what I said just now? You must hide me, if it's not Ursula. See, I'll run behind that curtain there. If it's Ursula, I'll come out, if it's anybody else, you must send them away and — [*Knocking repeated.*]

BLIMBOE.

But if it's Sir George himself?

DOROTHY.

Sir George! Oh, then you must send him to bed — or perhaps I'll come out and ask him where Ursula is. Won't he be surprised?

BLIMBOE.

Undoubtedly. [*Knocking repeated.*]

DOROTHY.

Quick, quick, or the whole house will be roused. See, here I am ! [*She runs back, goes behind the curtain and peeps out. BLIMBOE stands a minute, shakes his head, takes candle and poker from the door and goes off, L. A pause. DOROTHY looks out from curtains.*]
Who is it ? Who is it ?

HASSENDEN.

[*Speaking, off.*] But I will come in, sir ! Stand aside !

DOROTHY.

[*Peeping out.*] Mercy, it's Frank ! Oh, if he found me here !
[*Hides. Enter HASSENDEN impetuously, followed by BLIMBOE. HASSENDEN is in riding-dress, and spattered with mud.*]

HASSENDEN.

[*Coming down.*] Now, sir, you are a parson ?

BLIMBOE.

[*Looking round nervously, then putting candle down and coming L., still bolding poker.*] A clerk in holy orders, my lord, at your service.

HASSENDEN.

Then, sir, it ill becomes you to screen villainy, or to live in a house where villainy is practiced.

BLIMBOE.

Villainy ?

HASSENDEN.

Aye, sir, rank villainy. The lady may have been rash and indiscreet ——

BLIMBOE.

Indeed, since you say so ——

HASSENDEN.

Peace, sir ! It is worse villainy to take advantage of her innocence. I ask you, sir, where is my ——

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B L I M B O E.

[*Confused.*] Your — your betrothed, my lord ?

H A S S E N D E N.

My betrothed ? Now what in the devil's name has my betrothed to do with the matter ?

B L I M B O E.

True, true. Of course, my lord, nothing. I — I grew confused. I — I was not in truth thinking of your betrothed.

H A S S E N D E N.

The deuce take your thoughts, sir ! Where is my sister ? Where is Lady Ursula ? [BLIMBOE *drops into chair, L.*] Aye, and where is your friend and patron, Sir George Sylvester ?

B L I M B O E.

[*Despairingly.*] I don't know, my lord — I don't know.

H A S S E N D E N.

There was more in that fainting fit than I knew of. [*Crosses to BLIMBOE and shakes him by the shoulder.*] Listen, sir, listen. [*DOROTHY looks out in fright.*] I was engaged in a quarrel with Sir George. I had to go to London. I came home at midnight. What do I find there, sir, what do I find there ?

B L I M B O E.

I don't know. I don't know even what you'll find here.

H A S S E N D E N.

[*Looking round. DOROTHY hides hastily.*] Here ! No, nor I, either. On my return, sir, I found Miss Fenton gone to bed in —

B L I M B O E.

Gone to bed ! Oh, dear ! Oh, dear !

HASSENDEN.

Gone to bed in hysterics, sir, and her aunt weeping in the hall. And why? [*DOROTHY looks out again.*] Because my sister had gone to this house at eight o'clock — and in man's clothes — so help me, masquerading as her brother — ~~before God~~ — in breeches, sir — and now at twelve — at twelve, sir — has not returned. Is she here, sir? Where is she? You're a parson, but by heaven I'll have the truth of you, if I have it at my sword's point.

BLIMBOE.

Lord have mercy on us!

HASSENDEN.

Is she here, I say? [*Looks round.* *DOROTHY bides again hastily.*]

BLIMBOE.

No, no; she's not here — Lady Ursula is not here.

HASSENDEN.

Sir, I will not take your word for it.

BLIMBOE.

[*Rising.*] My lord, you are offensive. If I were not of a sacred profession ——

HASSENDEN.

I think you're somewhat late in remembering your profession, sir. I know I cannot fight you, but [*he half-draws his sword*] you stand in my way at your peril! [*BLIMBOE raises poker.*] Out of the way, sir! [*DOROTHY looks out.*] I'll search every nook [*DOROTHY bides again*] and cranny of the house, but I'll find her.

BLIMBOE.

Lady Ursula is not here — I swear to you, she isn't here ——

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H A S S E N D E N.

Then there's no harm done by my searching. Stand aside, sir !
 [BLIMBOE *edges up between HASSENDEN and the curtains.*] Stand
 aside. By heaven, I believe you have someone here ! Answer
 me, sir ! Is anyone here ? [DOROTHY *peeps out, hides, but leaves
 a portion of her skirt visible.*] I'll look for myself, sir. [BLIMBOE
glances round, sees skirt and coughs loudly. HASSENDEN *stares at him
 suspiciously. He looks up at ceiling. So does HASSENDEN. Then
 BLIMBOE steals a glance round. HASSENDEN catches him and sees
 skirt.*] There, there ! [*Rushes up back. BLIMBOE catches hold
 of him.*] Let me go, sir, let me go ! [*Skirt vanishes.*]

B L I M B O E.

But — but it was a skirt, my lord, and Lady Ursula ——

H A S S E N D E N.

Oh, Sir George may have more resources than we know of, sir.
 You'll not let me go ? So —— [*Pushes BLIMBOE back violently,
 L. Goes up and lays hold of the curtain.*] I prefer to know the
 worst. [*He pulls back the curtain, discovering DOROTHY, who has
 bidden her face in her hands and so stands.*] By God ! She's
 here ! [*Falls back aghast. At this moment SYLVESTER appears in
 the doorway in his riding-dress and boots. BLIMBOE, L., leaning on
 table on which he has laid the poker. A short pause.*]

S Y L V E S T E R.

Why — why — what's this ? The door standing open and
 [*advancing*] Lord Hassenden here ! And —— [HASSENDEN
bearing his voice, turns.] And ——

H A S S E N D E N.

Yes, I, Sir George — and —— [*Steps up to DOROTHY and
 moves her hands from her face.*] No, not Ursula ! Good heavens
 — Dorothy !

The L A D Y U R S U L A I I I

B L I M B O E.

[*Sinking into a chair.*] Oh, Lord help us now !

D O R O T H Y.

I — I — I — [*Clasping her bands.*] Oh, Frank, it might have been Ursula !

H A S S E N D E N.

I admire your ingenuity in finding matter for consolation, madame. It might have been my sister — it is only my future wife.

D O R O T H Y.

[*Running down to BLIMBOE.*] Oh, Mr. Blimboe, must we tell him the truth ?

B L I M B O E.

Well, madame, the circumstances are desperate.

H A S S E N D E N.

Sir George Sylvester, how comes that lady in your house ?

S Y L V E S T E R.

[*Coming down, C.*] I should suggest that you ask the lady.
[*HASSENDEN goes down, R., impatiently.*] For myself, I should be glad to hear the answer to that question — and to one other. How come you here, my lord ?

H A S S E N D E N.

I came to seek my sister.

D O R O T H Y.

So did I, Frank.

H A S S E N D E N.

[*To DOROTHY.*] You knew she came here, then ?

D O R O T H Y.

Oh, dear ! [*Turns again to BLIMBOE, who takes her hand and pats it.*]

HASSENDEN.

[*To SYLVESTER.*] And you, sir, knew that my sister came here?

SYLVESTER.

No, my lord, I know nothing. I may have my opinion.

HASSENDEN.

And that she is here?

BLIMBOE.

[*Starting up.*] No, no.

SYLVESTER.

Pray don't interpose, Mr. Blimboe. [*BLIMBOE sinks back.*] At last I can meet Lord Hassenden without an intermediary. [*To HASSENDEN.*] The house lies open to you, my lord. Pray search it. You have found one lady here. You may find another. Who knows, who knows? Ladies come even to houses where their presence is least looked for and in no way invited. You and I know that, my lord. Blimboe, pray take a candle and guide Lord Hassenden. That door, my lord, [*pointing R.*] gives access to the stairs. I beg you to search — search thoroughly. For all I know, the whole village may be hiding in my house.

HASSENDEN.

I will go. I do not trust you. [*SYLVESTER bows low. To BLIMBOE.*] Come, sir. [*BLIMBOE rises, takes candle from table. HASSENDEN motions him to precede him, and with a bow to SYLVESTER, follows him off, R. SYLVESTER crosses hastily to DOROTHY.*]

SYLVESTER.

Go after them. Tell him what you know; let Blimboe tell what he knows. I left Lady Ursula at his own rooms in London about eleven o'clock. After that I know nothing.

The LADY URSULA 113

DOROTHY.

Oh, shall you fight, after all ?

SYLVESTER.

I don't think so ——

DOROTHY.

But when he comes back ——

SYLVESTER.

[*Smiling.*] When he comes back, I shan't be here. If I stay he'll force another quarrel. Keep him ten minutes and I shall be beyond his reach. My horse is still at the door.

DOROTHY.

You — you'll run away ?

SYLVESTER.

Yes. Quick, after them ! Try to quiet him. Go, go. [*He leads her R., and she runs off. He stands looking after her.*] I'll be off. Heaven save us, what a position ! God help all our reputations ! [*URSULA appears in door, L., in her own dress, and stands looking at him with a smile.*] It would scarcely have been worse had he in very truth found Ursula. Ah, but what's become of the pretty madcap ? Faith, I'd love to see her ! What's become of her ?

LADY URSULA.

I — I don't know what will — if — if my brother isn't here.

SYLVESTER.

[*Turning and starting.*] Lady Ursula !

LADY URSULA.

Yes, yes — but pray don't shout my name so loud. [*Coming down.*] Oh, Sir George, Sir George, what a quiet, peaceful world it would be if there were no men in it !

SYLVESTER.

Perhaps, madame. And I think there is at least, since eleven o'clock, one less in it !

LADY URSULA.

I will deal fairly with you — I will confess nothing.

SYLVESTER.

Nay, I'll deal handsomely with you — I will assert nothing.

LADY URSULA.

And I will deny nothing.

SYLVESTER.

Why, then, I will question nothing.

LADY URSULA.

Moreover — I will remember nothing.

SYLVESTER.

To match you — I will forget nothing.

LADY URSULA.

You don't please me there. I wish that you should forget ——

SYLVESTER.

Everything ?

LADY URSULA.

[*Smiling.*] At least — something.

SYLVESTER.

Well — I will forget Mr. Barrington ——

LADY URSULA.

[*Courtseying.*] You are swift to divine my wishes.

SYLVESTER.

In the presence of Lady Ursula — but, on my soul, only then.

L A D Y U R S U L A.

And, alas, I shall not be with you often. [SYLVESTER *advances a step towards her.*] Oh, I'm forgetting my brother. Is he here ?

S Y L V E S T E R.

I must confess that he's somewhere in the house.

L A D Y U R S U L A.

Oh, where, where ? And what is he doing ?

S Y L V E S T E R.

To be frank — he is searching the house for you, Lady Ursula.

L A D Y U R S U L A.

He thinks I am here !

S Y L V E S T E R.

Such notions get into a young man's hot head.

L A D Y U R S U L A.

Is he angry ?

S Y L V E S T E R.

Monstrously ! Did you come to seek him ?

L A D Y U R S U L A.

Yes, to seek him and Dorothy.

S Y L V E S T E R.

[*Smiling.*] And for no other purpose ?

L A D Y U R S U L A.

[*Smiling.*] Pray, is Dorothy here ?

S Y L V E S T E R.

For no other purpose under heaven ?

L A D Y U R S U L A.

I — I didn't expect to find you here.

116 *The* A D V E N T U R E *of*

SYLVESTER.

You would have come — and gone — and never let me know ?

LADY URSULA.

Yes, indeed — unless ——

SYLVESTER.

[*Going nearer to her.*] Unless what, Lady Ursula ?

LADY URSULA.

Unless I chanced again to drop my handkerchief. [*A pause.*]

SYLVESTER.

[*Low.*] Will you give it me ? Indeed, you owe it me.

LADY URSULA.

How does this request agree with your vow, sir ? Should he beg a lady's handkerchief who has sworn never to see a lady's face ?

SYLVESTER.

The oath was improvident. I own it. Yet, having sworn, I will observe it.

LADY URSULA.

You will observe it ! Why, then ——

SYLVESTER.

Save by the merest hair's breadth.

LADY URSULA.

Ah !

SYLVESTER.

For I break it by the merest hair's breadth, if [*he comes close to her*] if henceforward I see only one. Give me the handkerchief.

LADY URSULA.

I think — I think we are forgetting my brother.

S Y L V E S T E R.

[*Sighing.*] I think I am forgetting my flight. I was about to escape when you arrived.

L A D Y U R S U L A.

To escape ?

S Y L V E S T E R.

From your brother's fury, unless, indeed, he is pacified by what he hears from Miss Fenton and from Blimboe.

L A D Y U R S U L A.

Surely he will be — and there will be nothing then for you to escape from.

S Y L V E S T E R.

Indeed, there will then be nothing that I can, or would, escape from.

[*Voices of HASSENDEN and BLIMBOE off R.*

L A D Y U R S U L A.

Ah, what's that ? Is that my brother ?

S Y L V E S T E R.

I fear it is. And he won't have found you.

L A D Y U R S U L A.

No — and he shan't. I'll hide ! Where shall I hide ?

S Y L V E S T E R.

No, no, you mustn't —

L A D Y U R S U L A.

Yes, but I will ! I wouldn't have him find me here. Where shall I hide ? [*Looks round.*] Ah, the curtains ! [*Runs up.*

S Y L V E S T E R.

[*Pursuing her.*] No, no — in heaven's name, not the curtains !

L A D Y U R S U L A.

[*Pausing a moment.*] Why not !

SYLVESTER.

Because — because Miss ——— [*Voices again just off.*

LADY URSULA.

There's no time for anywhere else. See, I'm hidden safe!
[*Gets behind curtains.*]

SYLVESTER.

Yes — so was Miss Dorothy. [*Turns and comes down hastily as HASSENDEN enters R., followed by DOROTHY and BLIMBOE. They remain R., HASSENDEN comes R. C., to where SYLVESTER is.*] Well, my lord, you have searched — and not found what you sought?

HASSENDEN.

No, Sir George, I have not searched — and I will not search. I have been informed of all that has passed by Miss Fenton and Mr. Blimboe, and [*pause*] in truth I must admit that it is you, not I, who have cause for complaint.

SYLVESTER.

I complain of nothing in what has passed.

HASSENDEN.

You, not I, are entitled to satisfaction.

SYLVESTER.

So far as matters have gone, my lord, I am most heartily satisfied.

HASSENDEN.

I am ready to answer for my sister's fault. It is in excuse for her, not for myself, that I beg you to remember her youth and ignorance.

SYLVESTER.

In my eyes, Lady Ursula needs no defence.

HASSENDEN.

She meant to save me from a danger into which her own thought-

lessness had brought me. However mistaken her action, I can't find it in my heart to be hard on her.

S Y L V E S T E R.

It is the last thing that I should find in my own heart. May we then be friends, according to her wish ?

H A S S E N D E N.

I desire nothing better. And after all that I have heard, it is but as a form that I beg the pledge of your word — your simple word as a gentleman —

S Y L V E S T E R.

To secrecy ? Assuredly it is yours !

H A S S E N D E N.

That I am sure of. But I didn't mean that.

S Y L V E S T E R.

What then ? I am at your service absolutely.

H A S S E N D E N.

Why, merely your word that my sister is not here.

D O R O T H Y.

[*Coming forward.*] Yes, and then we can go and seek her. She must be at home by now.

B L I M B O E.

[*Coming forward.*] And so the whole matter ends.

H A S S E N D E N.

It is with that object that I beg the favour of Sir George's assurance.

S Y L V E S T E R.

[*Embarrassed.*] Ah, yes, yes. True. You ask my — merely my —

DOROTHY.

Just your word that Ursula is not here.

HASSENDEN.

That my sister is not here.

BLIMBOE.

Exactly — exactly — that Lady Ursula is not here.

SYLVESTER.

Come, now, I'll explain the whole matter — the entire affair —

HASSENDEN.

No, no.

SYLVESTER.

From — from the very beginning. It was at four o'clock that —

DOROTHY.

Pray do not rehearse the whole story again, Sir George.

HASSENDEN.

No need, believe me, no need ! Your mere assurance sends me away content.

DOROTHY.

Indeed it is late, and we should all be abed.

BLIMBOE.

Aye — and I have my sermon still to finish.

SYLVESTER.

My lord — you — you do me wrong to ask the pledge of my word from me.

[*All show surprise, HASSENDEN anger.*

HASSENDEN.

Seeing your strange hesitation, sir, I begin to think that I do wrong to offer to accept it.

DOROTHY.

[*Going to HASSENDEN and laying hand on his arm.*] Frank, Frank !

SYLVESTER.

[*Angrily.*] My lord, you ——

BLIMBOE.

[*Going to SYLVESTER and restraining him.*] Sir George ! [SYLVESTER and HASSENDEN *front one another. A pause.*]

HASSENDEN.

[*With a sneering laugh.*] We have peacemakers again, I see —— more peacemakers.

SYLVESTER.

I will not quarrel. My lord, you put me to my word. I do —— I do not like the test : but I have no alternative. Since you put me to it, I will —— [URSULA *peeps out.*]

HASSENDEN.

You'll give it ? Ah, I knew you would. I wronged you. I will ask no more.

SYLVESTER.

Yes, I will ——

LADY URSULA.

[*Stepping out from behind the curtains.*] No. [ALL *turn to her and start.*]

HASSENDEN.

Ursula !

DOROTHY.

Heaven save us, Ursula !

LADY URSULA.

I am here. I will not have this gentleman dishonour his word for me. [*Coming down, C.*] Frank, for me he has done everything. For me he has given up a just quarrel with you —— for me

his house has been invaded — for me he has faced the contempt of his friends — for me his vow not to fight has been endangered, his vow to see no woman, broken. And for me he — he has declared in public, in face of ridicule, a — a feeling that he could not entertain. To shelter my good fame he has done all this. But he shall not dishonour his word for me. You ask him if I am here. Here I am. [*A pause.*

H A S S E N D E N.

[*Slowly.*] But how did you come here — and when ?

L A D Y U R S U L A.

A few moments ago. The chaise is now at the door with Quilton — question the man if you will. I heard you had come here, and I came to seek you.

H A S S E N D E N.

Seeking me ? [*Advancing towards her.*] Is that in truth all, Ursula ?

D O R O T H Y.

Why, for what else, Frank ?

B L I M B O E.

Surely for nothing else, my lord ?

L A D Y U R S U L A.

For nothing else, I vow ! Ah, you believe me, Frank ?

H A S S E N D E N.

[*Smiling.*] Why, yes, I believe you. [*Takes her hands and turns to SYLVESTER.*] And once again, I must beg forgiveness of Sir George.

S Y L V E S T E R.

You, my lord, I do most heartily forgive. But it is hard for me to do the like for Lady Ursula.

L A D Y U R S U L A.

[*Feigning surprise.*] Why, what's your quarrel with me, Sir George ? I protest that when I left you to go behind the curtains, you were in the most amiable temper with me.

S Y L V E S T E R.

My quarrel, madame, is a grave one — it is that you come for nothing else than — to seek your brother.

L A D Y U R S U L A.

[*Smiling.*] Add, then, sir, for the pleasure of your company.

S Y L V E S T E R.

No, I am not appeased.

L A D Y U R S U L A.

[*Recollecting.*] Ah ! Indeed, Frank, I was wrong. There was another purpose. There was a trifle that Sir George asked of — of Mr. Barrington.

S Y L V E S T E R.

Yes. If Lady Ursula gave me her forgiveness and her favour, I begged Mr. Barrington to prevail on her to bring me again her handkerchief.

H A S S E N D E N.

Her handkerchief !

B L I M B O E.

My lord, when Mr. Barrington came he chanced to drop his handkerchief.

D O R O T H Y.

Yes, Frank — and his handkerchief chanced to be marked “ Ursula.”

L A D Y U R S U L A.

I came also to discharge that errand. But, sir, are you my friend now ?

SYLVESTER.

I will change that name only for a better.

LADY URSULA.

And you are my brother's friend ?

SYLVESTER.

For your sake now, soon for his own.

DOROTHY.

Oh, there will be no duel, then ?

HASSENDEN.

[*Laughing.*] On my soul, I do not desire one.

SYLVESTER.

Nay, but I think there has been one.

HASSENDEN.

There has ?

SYLVESTER.

Between Lady Ursula and myself. She had the choice of weapons and ——

HASSENDEN.

And she chose ——

LADY URSULA.

Those that your sex invented. Don't lay the blame on us.

HASSENDEN.

And whose was the victory ? It was not, I trust, like Joicey and McArthur's, a life and death encounter ?

SYLVESTER.

I may not name the stake, my lord — or you would have named it for me — a life and death encounter. But, at least, I am sore wounded.

DOROTHY.

[*Going to URSULA.*] Won't you bind up his wounds for him, Ursula?

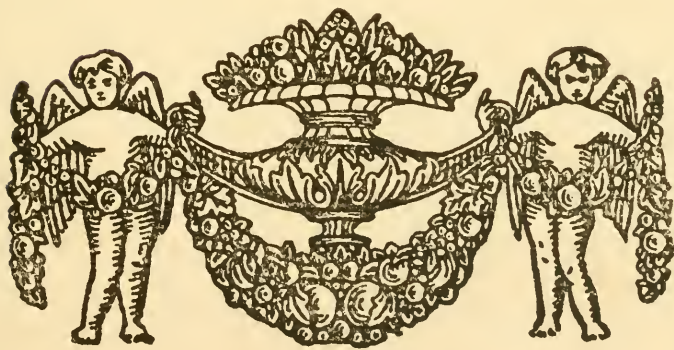
L A D Y U R S U L A.

[*Shy and laughing.*] I—I—— [*Suddenly advances to SYLVESTER, holding out her handkerchief.*] Yes, let him take — and keep this handkerchief. [*As she gives him the handkerchief, he seizes her hands. The others turn away and go up, laughing. URSULA and SYLVESTER stand a moment.*]

S Y L V E S T E R.

You drew the loaded pistol — and I — fall. [*He kneels and kisses her hand.*]

C U R T A I N



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